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CONTRIBUTORS

JAYARAJ ACHARYA, Ph.D., Professor of English at Tribhuvan University.

ANTHONY M. de L. COSTELLO, Professor of International Child Health, Perinatal Care Unit, Institute of Child Health, London, UK.

MALA DHITAL, M.A. is a freelance consultant. She worked as a research assistant during the fieldwork for the NAYA Survey.

KRISHNA HACHHETHU, Ph.D., Lecturer in Political Science at Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University. His latest publication is *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and People, 2002*.

KESHAV L. MAHARJAN, Ph.D., Associate Professor at Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan

DHARMA S. MANANDHAR, Consultant Paediatrician and Director, Mother and Infant Research Activities (MIRA), Kathmandu, Nepal

MADAN K. MANANDHAR, Deputy Director, Management Guidance Department, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Lalitpur, Nepal

NEPHIL MATANGI MASKAY, Ph.D., Deputy Director at Research Department, Nepal Rastra Bank, Central Office, Baluwatar, Kathmandu is associated with the Claremont Institute of Economic Policy Studies (USA) and Department of Economics, Patan Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

NATASHA MESKO, Research fellow, Perinatal Care Unit, Institute of Child Health, London, UK.

MIRA MISHRA, M.A., is Lecturer at Women's Studies Programme, Padma Kanya Campus, Tribhuvan University.

TIRTHA PRASAD MISHRA, Ph.D., Professor of History, Executive Director of Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University.

SHAILES NEUPANE, M.S., is Executive Director of Valley Research Group, Kathmandu. He served as the director of the fieldwork for the NAYA Survey.

DAVID OSRIN, Senior research fellow, Perinatal Care Unit, Institute of Child Health, London, UK.

ANANDA P SHRESTHA, Reader in English, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University

BHIM P. SHRESTHA, Programme manager, Mother Infant Research Activities (MIRA), Hetauda, Nepal

JYOTI R. SHRESTHA, Advisory group, Management, Mother and Infant Research Activities (MIRA), Kathmandu, Nepal.

HILARY STANDING, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, University of Sussex and Honorary Consultant in Operational Social Research Institute of Child Health, London

ABHI SUBEDI, Ph.D., Professor of English at Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University and President of the Nepal Centre of International Theatre Institute (ITI).

TAKASHI TAKAHATAKE, Ph.D., at Division of Cultural and Regional Studies, Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan

SURESH TAMANG, Senior facilitation and training officer, Mother Infant Research Activities (MIRA) Hetauda, Nepal.

SHYAM THAPA, Ph.D., Senior Scientist of Family Health International (FHI), currently is Chief of FHI's Population and Reproductive Health Office in Kathmandu, Nepal. He is the chief resident advisor for the Nepal Adolescents and Young Adults (NAYA) Survey.

MARK TURIN, is completing a grammar of Thangmi, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in eastern Nepal. He is Manager of the Digital Himalaya Project at the University of Cambridge, and is a frequent contributor to *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* and the *Nepali Times*.

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ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF SURVEY DATA ON ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY BY TALKING WITH THE FIELD STAFF

**Shyam Thapa,
Mala Dhital and
Shailes Neupane**

Survey interviewers and supervisors are a rich source of information. Long hours in the field allow them to intimately observe and interact with study respondents. The trained interviewer can view the living conditions and relationship dynamics in the home and, more important, observe the respondents' reactions to survey questions revealed through their body language, verbal expressions, and apparent conviction. During this "window of opportunity," rapport often develops between the interviewer and the respondent, allowing the interviewer to gain valuable information far beyond the answers given in the survey questionnaire.

Although feedback from the field staff is common in survey research, systematic documentation of the feedback is unusual.¹ Yet such insights from the field interviewers are often an invaluable source of information to an analyst who must interpret the survey data.

The Nepal Adolescent and Young Adult (NAYA) Survey collected information about the reproductive health knowledge, practices, and behavior of a representative sample of Nepalese in the 14 to 22 age group. Its objective was to provide better guidance for the development of effective policies, strategies, and programs aimed at improving the reproductive health of this age group. The survey was carried out in five urban areas and eight rural districts of Nepal. Valley Research Group implemented the fieldwork with technical support from Family Health International.

Upon completion of the fieldwork, we, the research staff, met with the survey interviewers and supervisors to discuss their field experiences. The main purpose of these discussion sessions was to collect qualitative

information that would enhance the analysts' understanding of the quantitative data recorded in the survey questionnaires and clarify respondents' thinking behind their answers to the open-ended survey questions. Separate reports on the discussion sessions were prepared for the rural and urban areas (Thapa, Dhital, and Neupane, 2000a, 2000b). This background report synthesizes the main points reviewed in the discussion sessions in both areas.

Methodology

We convened a discussion session with the field staff from each of the 13 sample districts. The discussions were similar to the focus-group discussions held with young Nepalese before the formal survey was conducted. Each session involved nine to ten persons and lasted typically one to two hours. We followed a discussion guide designed to obtain information on the same topics from all the survey teams, though some groups discussed certain items in more detail than others. The discussions were tape-recorded and transcribed.

Profile of the Field Staff

The field staff were trained in Kathmandu for one week prior to conducting the survey. During their training they received instruction on the survey topics, the questionnaire, interview methods, and role playing. The training included discussion of potential problems that the interviewers might encounter in the field and field practice with the questionnaire. Interviewers were required to personally fill out two to four questionnaires upon returning to their district so that they would become comfortable with the survey questions.

A total of 111 persons (20 supervisors and 91 interviewers) were assigned to work in the field. Of them 64 were men and 47 were women. The ratio of interviewers to supervisors was 4.6 to 1 (Table 1). The supervisors were slightly older than the interviewers (30 years versus 26 years, on average). The majority of the staff were unmarried students having an average of 14 years' schooling. Two-thirds had spent their childhood in rural areas.

The fieldwork was conducted between 5 July and 26 August 2000 in the urban areas and in two phases in the rural sample areas: from 5 August to 2 October in the Hill region and from 29 August to 29 October 2000 in the Terai (southern ecological) region. The urban areas were oversampled to allow reliable estimates based only on the urban adolescent and youth population. Appropriate sampling weights (see Bastola 2000a, 2000b) are being used for the aggregate-level analysis.

In the urban areas, more than 18,000 houses were visited in the 100 census wards or blocks (Table 2). Those houses contained nearly 25,000 households (defined as residents who shared the same kitchen), or about 1.4 households per house visited. Among all the urban households surveyed, 10,298 had eligible respondents—that is, males and females aged 14 to 22 who had spent the previous night in their house. Similarly, in the rural Hill and Terai regions, nearly 22,000 houses were visited in the selected wards. Those houses contained nearly 23,000 households, or about 1.1 household per house visited. Among all the rural households surveyed, 10,610 had eligible respondents.

The Urban and Rural Samples

In urban areas, 3,053 eligible respondents in 2,000 households were selected for interview, representing 19.4 percent of the 10,298 households with eligible respondents (Table 3). The sample households were selected by means of sampling intervals and random numbers based on a random table. The largest numbers of respondents were unmarried males (1,278, or 93 percent of all males) and unmarried females (1,054, or 73 percent of all females). In the rural areas, a total of 4,000 households and 5,478 eligible respondents were selected for interview. The 4,000 rural households represented 37.7 percent of the 10,610 households with eligible respondents. Of the selected respondents, 58 percent of the females and 79 percent of the males were single. These differences in the percentages of single males and females were expected, given the societal norm of earlier marriage for females, especially in rural areas.

Of the selected urban households, 96.4 percent were successfully interviewed. The percentage for individual respondents was slightly lower, 92.5 percent (ranging narrowly from 91 percent to 95 percent). The ratio of eligible respondents selected for interview to the number of households selected for interview was 1.53 to 1 for all five urban areas. The ratio was highest in Kathmandu and lowest in Pokhara (not shown in Table 3). The high ratio in Kathmandu might have been due to in-migration by young people for education and employment opportunities. Altogether, 2,824 respondents (51 percent female and 49 percent male) were successfully interviewed in the five urban areas.

**Table 1: Profile of the Supervisors and Interviewers:
NAYA Survey, 2000**

Field staff	Number or mean	Percent
Supervisors	20	18
Interviewers	91	82
Ratio of interviewers to supervisor	4.6	
Gender		
Males	64	57.7
Females	47	42.3
Ethnicity		
Bahun	55	49.5
Chetri	22	19.8
Newar	19	17.1
Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai	11	9.9
Other (Tharu, Giri)	4	3.6
Age (mean, SD)	25.46 (4.26)	na
Supervisors	30.30 (3.73)	na
Interviewers	24.40 (3.58)	na
Educational attainment (mean, SD)	13.81 (1.47)	na
Marital status		
Unmarried	74	66.7
Married	37	33.3
Childhood place of residence		
Urban	42	37.8
Rural	69	62.2
Primary occupation (current)		
None	26	23.4
Housewife	4	3.6
Student	70	63.1
Other	11	9.9
Total	111	na

SD = standard deviation; na = not applicable.

In the rural areas, about 94 percent of the households and an equal percentage of individual respondents were successfully interviewed. The ratio of eligible respondents to the number of households was 1.4 to 1, slightly lower than in the urban areas. Altogether, 2,730 females and 2,423 males were successfully interviewed in the eight rural districts selected for the survey.

The overall nonresponse rate (including incomplete interviews) was only 7.5 percent for the urban areas and 5.9 percent for the rural areas (Table 4). Of the total nonresponses in the urban sample, 42 percent of eligible respondents were not interviewed because they were not at home, despite up to three attempts by the interviewer to contact them. Nearly 29 percent of nonrespondents refused to participate in the interview. In 13 percent of the urban nonresponse cases the interview was terminated primarily because of interference by elders in the family or because the respondent was called away by other family members. In the rural sample, the three prominent reasons for nonresponse were the respondent's absence, refusal, and miscellaneous other reasons.

**Table 2: Sample Cluster and Household Size:
NAYA Survey 2000**

Description	Urban	Rural			Total
		Hills	Terai	Both	
No. of wards/blocks	100	80	80	160	260
No. of houses	18,311	9,153	12,585	21,738	40,049
No. of households	24,972	9,262	13,449	22,711	47,683
Ratio of households to houses	1.36	1.01	1.07	1.04	1.19
No. of households with eligible respondents	10,298	4,675	5,935	10,610	20,908
Proportion of households with eligible respondents to number of households	0.41	0.50	0.44	0.47	0.44

Overall, the field staff of 111 people visited more than 40,000 households and contacted more than 47,000 household heads. They attempted to interview more than 8,500 adolescents and young adults and completed interviews with nearly 8,000 respondents. In the course of collecting the data for the survey, they accumulated a great deal of field experience. The ensuring sections

discuss their perceptions of that experience, including difficulties in soliciting information about subjects that were personal and sensitive.

Findings

The discussion below focuses on two major components of the fieldwork. First, we discuss issues related to the household component of the survey, including location identification and interviews with the household head. The second component deals with interviews with the respondents themselves and the specific questions contained in the survey. In our follow-up discussions with the field staff, we asked them about those questions that we thought could be difficult to ask or for respondents to answer.

Household Lists

In both the rural and urban areas, the actual number of households in each sample block or ward was found to differ somewhat from the numbers in the sampling list, probably because the sampling list had been generated from the sampling frame based on the 1991 Census, the only sampling frame available. The boundaries of some of the sample clusters also proved to be incorrectly specified. This discrepancy was rectified upon verification with local officials.

In a majority of the districts, the field staff found more households than were listed in the sampling list. In two rural districts (Rupandehi and Kavre), however, there were fewer households than recorded in the sampling list. This might have been due to out-migration for employment. In one village (Saptari), most of the males had migrated to Punjab, India, and only females were available for interview.

Table 3: Sample and Interview Results: NAYA Survey, 2000

Description	Urban	Rural			Total
		Hills	Terai	Both	
Sample selected for interview					
No. of households	2,000	2,000	2,000	4,000	6,000
Eligible respondents selected for interview	3,053	2,695	2,783	5,478	8,531
Single females	1,132	1,036	635	1,671	2,803
Married females	413	414	805	1,219	1,632
Single males	1,397	1,102	953	2,055	3,452
Married males	111	143	390	533	644
Ratio of eligible respondents to number of households	1.53	1.35	1.39	1.37	1.42
No. of households per interviewer	43.8	55.6	62.5	59.1	54.0
Sample interviewed					
No. of households	1,927	1,815	1,933	3,748	5,675
Eligible respondents actually interviewed	2,824	2,512	2,641	5,153	7,977
Single females	1,054	982	595	1,577	2,631
Married females	391	370	783	1,153	1,544
Single males	1,278	1,028	883	1,911	3,189
Married males	101	132	380	512	613
Percentage interviewed					
No. of households	96.4	90.8	96.7	93.7	94.6
Individual respondents	92.5	93.2	94.9	94.1	93.5
Single females	93.1	94.8	93.7	94.4	93.9
Married females	94.7	89.4	97.3	94.6	94.6
Single males	91.5	93.3	92.7	93.0	92.4
Married males	90.9	92.3	97.4	96.1	95.2
No. of respondents per interviewer	64.2	69.8	82.5	76.2	72.2

Table 4: Reasons for Noninterviews: NAYA Survey, 2000

Reason	Number					Percentage distribution				
	Urban	Rural			Total	Urban	Rural			Total
		Hill	Terai	Both			Hill	Terai	Both	
Not at home	95	66	61	127	222	41.5	36.1	43.0	39.1	40.1
Incomplete	30	14	12	26	56	13.1	7.7	8.5	8.0	10.1
Refused	65	35	21	56	121	28.4	19.1	14.8	17.2	21.8
Other	39	68	48	116	155	17.0	37.2	33.8	35.7	28.0
Total	229	183	142	325	554	100	100	100	100	100
Percentage to the total sample	7.5	6.8	5.1	5.9	6.5	na	na	na	na	na

na = not applicable.

Lists of Families

In urban areas, some of the respondents and their parents or guardians wanted to know what benefit they would receive for participating in the survey. In some areas it was difficult to contact heads of households, and some of them were uncooperative or even rude. In rural areas, the interviewers encountered a variety of problems during the listing of the household members. For example, in Argakhachi District, the residents whose houses were not selected expressed disappointment, and many asked why their neighbor's house had been selected instead of theirs. A few residents even became aggressive and threatening. Many suspected (wrongly) that the selection process had been influenced by political favoritism. In their debriefings the interviewers mentioned to us that the ward chief and ward members assisted in clarifying the purpose of the survey and paving the way for the interviews.

In some rural areas, especially in Dailekh and Arghakhachi districts, rebel activities created problems for the interviewers. The rebels, often referred to as "Maoists," tend to travel in groups of unrelated males and females. Because the survey teams fitted such a profile, villagers suspected them of being rebels and were afraid of them. Some household heads would not tell the interviewers the names of the eligible respondents, saying that a respondent was not at home. The field staff dealt with this situation by meeting with teachers, local leaders, and other residents to solicit their support and ensure their credibility in the community.

The harvest season also hindered effective fieldwork, especially in Ilam District, where the cardamom and tea harvests made it difficult to meet respondents and household heads in their homes. In Kavre and Banepa districts, the household heads were anxious to list as many names as possible, thinking perhaps that they would receive some kind of benefit for doing so.

In a few cases, particularly among illiterate families, the household heads could not provide the full names of their family members because they were accustomed to calling a child or daughter-in-law by her birth-order or marriage-order title. The interviewers encountered many poor people in selected areas of Banke District. During the listing, it was difficult to record data on *sukumbasis* (landless squatters) who had migrated from India because many lacked national identity cards and had no permanent residence. In selected communities of Saptari District, many parents did not want their daughters to participate in the survey. As a result, the interviewers needed to spend much time trying to persuade them of the importance of participating. Language presented difficulty in some areas. Interviewers spoke Awadhi, Hindi, Maithili, and Tamang in some districts to communicate with the respondents and their parents. Aside from these instances of challenges and difficulties, local residents and respondents in the majority of the areas were cooperative and facilitated the conduct of the survey.

Contacting and Interviewing the Respondents

To make the interviews gender-friendly, women interviewed female respondents and men interviewed male respondents. Nevertheless, the interviewers encountered various obstacles in conducting the interviews.

In Kathmandu, for example, the interviewers found it difficult to meet with the respondents during the day because most of them were attending school. Before and after school, many urban teens were engaged in language or computer classes, making interview times difficult to schedule. Interviewers visited the same household two to three times trying to meet the respondents.

In selected business communities (e.g., Birgunj), the interviewers had difficulty meeting business and factory workers. Most employees left home early and returned late in the day. Many shop owners and workers were unwilling to participate in the interview and, if they agreed, refused to respond to many questions. Many business owners suspected that the interviewers might have come from the tax office to assess their tax situation. In Banepa,

the largest town in Kavre District, some people refused to participate because they distrusted the interviewers.

The interviewers also reported problems interviewing respondents employed as servants. The respondents' employers sometimes interrupted the interviews to call the servants back to work, preventing completion of the interview. Many servants were illiterate or poorly educated, and their interview time had to be lengthened to explain the questions to them. Some respondents living in rental housing were prevented from being interviewed by their landlord, who feared that the interview might cause a problem with taxes. In a few cases, husbands did not allow their wives to be interviewed, even though the wives wanted to participate in the interview. Some household heads did not want to respond to questions about their household assets.

Many parents seemed uncomfortable when the interviewer took the respondent to a separate place to conduct the interview. They would interrupt the interview to ask such questions as, "What are you asking?" or "Why can't you conduct the interview in front of us?" Other parents, however, were thankful to the interviewer. One said, "Our daughters and sons could at least learn something useful about health from you."

Now and then a parent asked to see all the topics of the questionnaire before allowing his or her child to participate in the interview. Some parents insisted on being present during the interview and monitoring their child's responses. This inhibited both the interviewer's and the respondent's participation in the interview. A parent or guardian might interrupt the interview, objecting to the subject matter or insisting that the respondent did not know anything about the questions being asked. When the parent left the room, however, most respondents easily answered the questions.

Some respondents, particularly young and illiterate ones, had difficulty understanding and answering many questions. Younger respondents in particular tended to be shy and embarrassed by questions that asked them about puberty, sexual intercourse, and their knowledge and use of family planning methods. Student respondents who had studied health or population subjects in school generally understood the questions and answered them more readily. Many of the respondents (and in some cases the interviewers too) felt that the questionnaire was too long, making it difficult for them to sustain their focus on the task and making interruptions likely.

Low literacy rates among respondents in the many of the rural communities resulted in low levels of understanding of some of the survey

topics, particularly those that were socially taboo. This problem may have affected the respondents' answers. Many questions had to be repeated and explained before participants could answer them. The interviewers felt that respondents often gave quick answers without having actual knowledge of the content, or else they simply answered "Don't know."

Particularly in remote communities with high rates of illiteracy (for example in Kavre and Dailekh districts), the respondents had trouble understanding many words used in the questionnaire. Interviewers had to learn local phrases and use them when confusion arose. In Kavre District, the predominance of the Tamang language in remote areas caused communication problems for the respondents and interviewers. Generally however, the interviewees with some education were able to understand the topics and questions. Because of this the response rate was high in communities where respondents had had some schooling.

In Banke District, the survey was difficult to administer because approximately half of the respondents were illiterate. The interviewers thought that parts of the survey were inappropriate for the Muslim areas of the district because as Muslim respondents showed no interest in the questions on family planning, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections. In the larger villages, prior experiences with nongovernmental organizations had prejudiced people against them, making it difficult for the interviewers to gain the trust of the respondents.

The large numbers of illiterate and lower-caste Indian immigrants residing in Mahottari District led to some problems in that area. Many people complained that because they did not have Nepalese citizenship and nationality cards, nongovernmental organizations offered them no assistance. Most respondents in the area lived in primitive huts and had no economic resources. The interviewers there spoke the Maithili language with respondents who did not understand Nepali.

The interviews lasted from 40 minutes to two hours, the amount of time depending largely upon the educational level of the respondent. Married female respondents required more time because of the additional modules on pregnancy and childbearing. Most respondents found the questionnaire to be too long, and some were offended by the personal questions about their sexual behavior and whether they had used drugs and alcohol. Despite all the difficulties described in this section, however, the field staff received excellent support for their work in most of the communities.

The Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire consisted of 13 modules: respondents' background; residential history; family characteristics; puberty; menstruation; friendship, love, and marriage; sexuality; pregnancy and childbearing; knowledge and practice of family planning, knowledge and incidence of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS; gender roles; mass-media exposure; awareness of girl-trafficking; and miscellaneous topics, including smoking, alcohol use, and drug use. Separate questionnaires were designed for unmarried females, married females, unmarried males, and married males (Family Health International and Valley Research Group 2000). The questionnaire for unmarried female and married females contained 240 and 260 possible questions, respectively, while the questionnaire for unmarried male and married males contained 212 and 223 possible questions, respectively.

Each interview began with the reading of a consent statement by the interviewer. After obtaining the respondent's consent, the interviewer asked questions about the respondent's demographic characteristics and socioeconomic background. These were followed by questions about the respondent's knowledge of, attitudes toward, and behavior related to health, particularly reproductive health.

Our discussions with the field staff focused on selected questions that were thought to be potentially problematic or sensitive. Those questions are discussed below.

The consent statement: You have been selected as a potential respondent for a survey aimed at understanding mainly reproductive health and related issues among males and females of ages 14 to 22 in selected urban and rural areas of Nepal. Some of the questions may be personal and sensitive. Your identification will be kept confidential and the responses will be used for research purposes only. I would like to request your consent to be interviewed.

Educated respondents in both the urban and rural areas easily understood and accepted the consent statement, whereas illiterate respondents required elaboration. For example, some illiterate respondents in rural areas required explanations in their local dialects. Some parents and respondents in urban areas became suspicious when they heard the words "confidential," "sensitive," and "research"; in a few incidences they refused to allow their child to be interviewed. Younger respondents, ages 14 to 16, did not

understand the purpose of the survey. Many of them just shook their heads and had no comment.

In what month and year were you born?

In the urban areas, the educated respondents and their parents had no problem providing the correct date of birth and the age of the respondents. Illiterate respondents and their parents often did not know the respondent's exact age, which then had to be estimated on the basis of related information. Some respondents could report their month of birth but did not know the year in which they were born, whereas others could not remember the month. A comment typical of some parents was, "You are an educated person and should know. Look at his face and help us determine his age." In some very poor areas, the household head might have reported the respondent's age incorrectly in order to have the child included in the survey in hopes of receiving a monetary benefit.

The interviewers used a number of methods to calculate a respondent's age. Sometimes the mother's age was asked and the difference was calculated by subtracting the number of years of marriage. The age given by the parents and that given by the respondent were often inconsistent. Interviewers reviewed citizenship papers and nationality cards if they were available. The interviewer might ask, "What other person in the neighborhood was born in the same year as you?" Then he asked that neighbor for his or her birth date. In one district, the parents of many respondents said that their child was born "during the drama of *Mahabharat*," a Hindu epic play that had been presented in the community. This proved to be a community event marker for many, and so the interviewers contacted the social institute to learn the exact year of its production.

Why did you stop going to school? (asked of respondents who had discontinued school)

In the urban areas of the survey, this question posed no problems. Many rural respondents, however, had difficulty articulating a specific reason. Most respondents had left school for multiple reasons, primarily economic necessity. Financial support was unavailable for them to continue their studies, or they were needed to help earn a living for the family. A few females in Ilam and Dailekh districts reported that they had left school to marry. Many females in Dailekh, Mahottari, and Rupandehi districts reported

that they had never attended school or had attended only primary school because their parents did not think it was important.

What is your father's and mother's completed level of schooling? (asked of all respondents)

Respondents had no problem with this question in the urban areas of the survey. In the rural areas, however, many respondents could not give correct information because they did not know the answer. Some siblings, when asked about their parents' education, gave conflicting answers.

Please give me some information about the house where you grew up with your parents/guardians. Excluding bathroom and toilet, how many rooms were there? Did that house have the following items? (The list included electricity, car, television set, bicycle, stove, radio, and refrigerator)

Most educated respondents in the urban areas had no difficulty identifying the household items, but some in Pokhara, Birgunj, and Biratnagar feared that giving a full account of their household's possessions could result in higher taxes. In contrast, illiterate respondents often had trouble counting the number of rooms and listing the assets of their households. The majority of homes in the rural areas had only one or two rooms and, unlike those in urban areas, lacked electricity and appliances. Homes in the Terai areas often included a bicycle, but many respondents in the Hill areas said they had never seen a bicycle. Most of the respondents' homes had a radio, though in rural areas of Kavre District only three or four homes among 120 were reported to have a radio.

To your knowledge, what is the usual age when boys and girls reach puberty? When a boy/girl reaches puberty physical changes are usually experienced. Can you mention these changes?

Many respondents, rural and urban, seemed embarrassed by the question. The interviewers thought this was the most difficult question to elicit responses to for that reason. Some male respondents just looked at the interviewer and smiled rather than answer the question. Knowledge about puberty was probably most underreported by respondents who were 16 years old or older. Respondents who had studied health education were less shy in their responses but probably reported less than they knew. The interviewers

also noted that some respondents answered quickly without appearing to give much thought to the correct answer.

Many respondents gave such vague answers as "becomes physically stronger or wiser." The interviewers felt they gave these responses to avoid the embarrassment of talking about specific physical changes. The interviewers gave hints and tried phrasing the question in different ways, but it was still difficult for most respondents to answer. The interviewers reported that it took an average of 20 to 25 minutes to ask and receive a response to the question. Most illiterate respondents did not appear to understand the question. Several urban respondents did not understand the word *paribartan* (transition, or puberty). Field staff who conducted interviews in Kavre and Dailekh districts thought that the respondents 14 to 16 years old did not reply because they did not understand the question. Some interviewers rephrased the question as, "What is the difference between your body and a child's body?" or "What are the changes that you can see?" Female respondents were embarrassed by the question on this topic at first but became more frank after the interviewer had developed rapport with them.

Where did you get your initial information about your puberty and associated changes?

Unlike the previous question about puberty, respondents had no problem with this one. Most of them said that they learned from their own experience. Other mentioned sources were school friends, the respondent's mother, neighbors, and radio broadcasts. The majority of respondents in Kathmandu said they had learned on their own.

How old were you when you had your first menstruation? (asked of female respondents)

Neither urban nor rural respondents were embarrassed to answer this question. In some areas, interviewers used the local words *pakha sareko* and *nachinuni* to refer to menstruation. Several illiterate respondents who could not remember their age at menarche asked their mothers.

Can a woman become pregnant if she has sex during her menstrual period?

Respondents in the urban areas seemed to understand the question and had no problem with it. However, respondents who had not studied health-education subjects had difficulty understanding the question. The interviewers

thought that illiterate respondents in particular did not understand the question and simply answered "Don't know." In the rural areas, responses differed according to the social norms of the respondents' ethnic group. In some districts (e.g., Argakharchi and Mahottari), the women answered that it was a great sin (*paap*) to have sexual intercourse during menses. In Dailekh most of the female respondents reported that women generally retired to the cowshed during their menses and therefore the chances of getting pregnant then were nil for them because they did not have physical contact with their husbands during that period.

Have you ever had a boyfriend/girlfriend? (asked of all respondents)

The interviewers in the urban areas experienced several problems with this question, depending upon the community. Most educated urban respondents easily understood the question, but illiterate respondents needed to have the term "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" clarified. In Pokhara and Lalitpur, unmarried female respondents hesitated to answer the question, leading the interviewers to suspect that the incidence of romantic relationships may have been underreported there. In Birgunj, unmarried males readily gave responses, whereas unmarried females were hesitant. In Biratnagar, unmarried females were shy in discussing the topic.

In rural areas, the interviewers encountered other problems. Many respondents initially did not understand the term "boyfriend" or "girlfriend," assuming that the term meant friends at school. Interviewers then used the expression, "someone you would later marry." In districts such as Ilam, where females married at a later age, female respondents were embarrassed by this question and usually avoided answering by quietly scratching the floor or serving tea and snacks. The interviewers therefore suspected that female respondents underreported such romantic attachments. In Dailekh, where most parents selected a future husband for their daughter when she was born, the female respondents understood the term "boyfriend" to apply to him. In Banke, most girls are betrothed at 8 to 10 years of age in a traditional Terai ceremony known as *gounq thaouna* and then married at the age of 14 to 16. So when the girls reported that they did not have a boyfriend, they were sincere in their answers. Male respondents had no problem answering this question and reported without hesitation if they had a girlfriend.

I will read a list of things commonly mentioned by women/men in choosing their future spouse. Tell me if you think they are important or not important to you.

Female respondents in all sample areas considered education to be the most important attribute when selecting a husband. In Kathmandu, respondents who were servants said that a prospective husband should be employed. Besides education, the most common answer given by rural respondents was that a man be of the same caste and have the approval of the girl's parents.

Do you think you were married too young, at the right age, or too old? (asked of married respondents)

Urban respondents had no problem answering the question. In most of the rural areas, where females are married and begin having children at an early age, the majority of respondents reported that they had been married too young. Illiterate and lower-caste respondents from the Kavre and Saptari districts reported that they had married at the right age because their parents had arranged the marriage and knew what was best for them. In the upper Hill area of Dailekh, where love marriages and elopement are customary, most male and female respondents said that they had married at the right age.

What type of marriage do you think is best, arranged marriage or love marriage?

The respondents easily understood and answered this question. Many urban respondents thought that both types of marriages were suitable, depending upon the couple's situation. The majority of rural respondents said that an arranged marriage was best.

Have you ever talked about sex and sex-related matters with anyone?

The respondents did not seem to understand the word *yaun* (sex), and so the interviewers explained the term or clarified it by using the equivalent term in their local dialect. Many female respondents who understood the question, especially unmarried girls, were too embarrassed to answer, and some even walked away from the interviewer to avoid giving an answer. Male respondents and students who had studied health or population subjects understood the question. Most replied that they had talked about sex with their

friends. In general, however, neither rural nor urban females wanted to discuss this topic, and the interviewers in Lalitpur thought that some respondents there may have been untruthful in their answers.

Do you agree or disagree that a woman should remain a virgin until she gets married?

In both urban and rural survey sites, male and younger respondents initially did not understand the word *kumaritwa* (to remain a virgin). Less-educated respondents at all sites required clarification of the term. Interviewers clarified it by defining virginity as not ever having had sexual intercourse. Nevertheless, some respondents may have considered having had a romantic attachment as losing their virginity. In some of the remote areas of Ilam District, some respondents thought that virginity meant not being married more than once. Despite the possible ambiguity, most respondents agreed that a woman should remain a virgin until she married.

Have any of your unmarried male/female friends had sexual intercourse? Has any of these friends ever become pregnant before getting married? (Has any of your male friends gotten a woman pregnant before getting married?)

Female respondents answered that very few of their unmarried friends had been involved in such activities. Their embarrassment about this topic probably led them to underreport their knowledge of premarital sex and pregnancy among their friends. The interviewers thought that most male respondents replied honestly, however.

Have you ever had sexual intercourse? (asked of unmarried respondents)

The interviewers had similar reactions to this question in rural and urban areas. Generally, single males were not embarrassed by the question and answered it readily, although in Mahottari District some males were so embarrassed that they looked away from the interviewer while replying. Female respondents were very embarrassed, and most would not answer the question. Some were angry that such a personal was being asked. A few walked away from the interviewer or refused to continue the interview. The interviewers thought that this question was inappropriate to ask of unmarried respondents, especially females. The majority of rural respondents reported having had no sexual intercourse, and the interviewers believed them.

Have boys or men ever teased you about your body or the way you were dressed—in a way that made you feel uncomfortable or afraid? (asked of female respondents)

Respondents had no problem understanding or answering this question in any sample area. In Kavre and Ilam, where both rural and urban areas were surveyed, rural respondents said that such activities did not occur, but urban respondents reported teasing and harassment. In the Muslim communities of Banke and Mahottari, respondents reported that such activities did not occur because of the strict religious custom of female separation. In Dailekh the respondents said that such behavior did not occur in their area because of the custom of early marriage.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding sexual behavior and female sexual rights? (The list included the statements that females have a right to say no to sex at any time and that sex is only for purpose of having a baby.)

The interviewers in all areas found this to be a difficult question to ask and clarify, and thought that it should be reformatted, because the statements had to be read at least two or three times. The wording "Do you agree or disagree ...?" may have confused some of the respondents. Furthermore, some of the statements that the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with, for example the statement that women had the right to refuse sex, seemed meaningless to them. Such views, having originated in the women's liberation movement in Western countries, were probably alien to their experience.

When during her monthly cycle do you think a woman is the most likely to conceive?

Educated respondents understood the question but often did not know the correct answer unless they had studied health-related subjects in school. Many illiterate respondents did not understand the word *chakra* (cycle) and answered "Don't know," even after being given an explanation by the interviewer.

Have you ever been pregnant? (asked of female respondents)

Interviewers in all areas, urban and rural, considered this to be a difficult and inappropriate question to ask of unmarried female respondents. Most unmarried females did not answer the question, some were made

uncomfortable by it, others were offended that such a personal question would be asked, and many were angry with the interviewer for asking it when they had previously reported that they had not had sexual intercourse.

How many children do you want to have in your whole life?

In the urban areas, most of the respondents did not have difficulty understanding this question. Clarification was required only in some cases. Most of the urban respondents said they would like to have only two or three children. Most of the rural respondents, however, wanted to have two to five children. A mother-in-law in Dailekh who overheard her daughter answer "two children" yelled at the interviewer, "What nonsense things are you teaching her? We want to have many, many children. What will we do with only two children?"

Why do you want to have this number of children?

Most respondents believed that having fewer children meant that those children would have a better life and greater educational opportunities. Illiterate and less-educated individuals in both rural and urban areas wanted three or four children because they feared that one might die and they wanted to ensure that more than one was left. One married woman explained why she wanted to have four children as follows: "Two will go away and two will live with us."

Have you heard of the following contraceptive methods? (The list included all temporary and permanent methods.)

Some interviewers considered this question to be inappropriate for unmarried respondents and were embarrassed to ask it. Most of the respondents had never heard of periodic abstinence (rhythm) or withdrawal as methods of contraception. Among the rural respondents, particularly married ones, awareness of Depo-Provera (a three-month injectable) and condoms seemed high. Unmarried respondents probably knew more than they reported but because of parental monitoring during the interview did not admit it. Those respondents who said they had heard of contraceptive methods said that they had learned about them from the Radio Nepal. Many female respondents were unaware of them because they did not understand Nepalese or because their mothers-in-law did not allow them to listen to the radio.

Do you approve or disapprove of the following specific statements regarding the use of condoms? (Using condoms decreases sexual pleasure, Using condoms properly can prevent pregnancy, Using condoms prevents sexually transmitted infections, and My partner would not like to use condoms)

Interviewers in Kathmandu experienced no problem with this question. Those in Biratnagar and Birgunj, however, found this to be a difficult question to ask of unmarried females, who had no knowledge of or experience with condoms. Married women understood the question and answered it without embarrassment or hesitation. In many rural areas, the statements had to be read two or three times, but many respondents still did not understand what the interviewer was asking. The confusion arose primarily because some of the statements were positive whereas others were negative.

Have you heard of abortion?

Respondents in urban areas had no problem responding to this question, and most Terai and Hill respondents easily understood and answered the question once the interviewer replaced the Nepalese term, *garva patan*, with the local term for abortion. In the Terai the local terms used were *bachha giraune* ("to shake off the pregnancy") and *bachha khusaune* ("to push pregnancy off"); in Banke they were *giraune* in the Madeshi dialect and *tuhaune* in the Pahadi dialect. Muslim women also knew about abortion.

Do you approve or disapprove of abortion in the following situations? (The list included an unplanned pregnancy of a married woman, an unplanned pregnancy of an unmarried woman, a pregnancy harmful to a woman's health, and a pregnancy in which the fetus was likely to be deformed.)

The interviewers in Kathmandu suspected that respondents who said they approved of abortion in some of the situations mentioned or gave qualified approval, depending upon the situation, had undergone an abortion. Some respondents answered that they were unsure about it. Illiterate respondents in Birgunj had trouble understanding this question and required clarification.

Where was your most recent abortion performed? (asked of female respondents who reported ever having had an induced abortion)

In Ilam most respondents understood the local word *khulaune* (meaning "to clean up the clog," a euphemism for induced abortion). In Mahottari,

where the interviewers used the Maithili words *safaiya* or *baccha giraune*, they thought that the respondents who were asked this question had a negative view of induced abortion or that the respondents' parents influenced their answers by their presence during the interviews. Nevertheless, they felt that abortion was very uncommon in that district and estimated that only about 10 to 15 percent of the respondents underreported their abortion experience.

Have you ever heard of the following sexually transmitted infections, or STIs? (The list included HIV/AIDS, herpes, gonorrhea, and syphilis.)

In the urban areas the pattern of responses differed according to the city. In Kathmandu most respondents had heard of AIDS and syphilis. Interviewers in Pokhara suspected that their respondents underreported their knowledge of STIs. Birgunj respondents were aware of AIDS but believed that all STIs were like AIDS, and they had never heard of gonorrhea or syphilis. The respondents in Biratnagar had heard of AIDS but not the other infections.

In the Hill areas, most respondents had heard of AIDS but could identify none of its symptoms. Respondents in those areas had little or no knowledge of other STIs. In Dailekh a common derogatory term for another person is *bhirangi* (syphilis), and therefore respondents knew of the disease and its symptoms. Students who had studied health or population subjects in school knew about almost all the STIs and could list many symptoms.

Most of the Terai respondents did not know about AIDS or the other STIs. Even respondents who had heard of AIDS knew little about it except its name. In Banke the interviewers were surprised that even some college students did not know about AIDS, despite a large billboard with AIDS information on it that was posted near the college campus. A few illiterate respondents said that these diseases did not exist in Nepal or were imported from other countries. A few thought that AIDS was a disease of people who lived in cities like Kathmandu.

In Mahottari District, male respondents pronounced AIDS as "iodex" or "aidas." Many had the opinion that the disease was dirty and therefore the patient was also dirty. Most respondents, however, had not heard of AIDS. Some respondents who knew about syphilis and gonorrhea used the terms *yaun rog* and *gandha rog* (sexual or dirty diseases) but did not know the diseases' symptoms. About a third of the female respondents knew about AIDS because several nongovernmental organizations had been working in the area, but some of those respondents had misconceptions about the disease.

During the last 12 months, have you had any disease that resulted from sexual intercourse?

In the urban areas, none of the respondents in Kathmandu or Biratnagar reported having had an STI during the previous 12 months. Some respondents in Biratnagar, however, did know of others who had had AIDS or another STI and had even died. In some cases the interviewers reworded the question so that respondents would not be offended by it. Interviewers believed that affirmative responses may have been underreported.

Interviewers in the rural areas felt that this was too sensitive a personal question. Although no respondents were offended by its being asked, many exhibited embarrassment when giving their answers. Only one respondent reported having had an STI. The interviewers believed that the respondents gave honest answers.

If parents could educate only one of their children, which should they educate—a son, a daughter, or should preference not be given [to one or the other]?

Most respondents in all the sample areas had no difficulty understanding this hypothetical question. Only some illiterate respondents had trouble understanding the word "preference." Responses in the Hill areas tended to fall into two categories: not giving preference to either sex, and giving preference to the son. In the Terai areas, most respondents felt that sons should be given preference in education.

Were you ever beaten or mistreated physically? (asked only of female respondents)

Some interviewers suspected that many respondents were not truthful in their answers and that underreporting likely occurred. Respondents who did report having been beaten said that their parents and teachers were the most frequent perpetrators.

Do you think a woman has reason to refuse sex to her husband in the following situations? (The situations are: if she is menstruating, if she doesn't want to get pregnant, if he beats her, if he is drunk, and if she has recently given birth)

Respondents in the urban areas had no difficulty in understanding the question. Most of them approved of the sexual rights of women listed in the

questionnaire. In the rural areas, in contrast, most interviewers reported that respondents did not understand the question, even after having the statements repeated several times. Many respondents answered "Don't know."

Which do you think is the most appropriate medium for the sex education of girls/boys? (asked twice—separately for each sex)

Illiterate respondents in the urban areas required clarification of the word "medium", but educated respondents easily understood and responded. The survey teams in the rural areas reported that, except in Mahottari, respondents had difficulty understanding the question. The interviewers in Banke rephrased the question by saying, "*Gaun ko keti harulai kasari dinu parche? Sahar ko lagi kasari dinu parcha?*" (How should we provide this education to girls and boys in the villages and cities?) Responses varied from one district to another.

Have you ever heard about trafficking of girls and women?

Interviewers and urban respondents had no problem with this question. Respondents in all rural areas except Dailekh had heard of female trafficking, but most reported that it was uncommon in their area. In Ilam, female trafficking was found to be a sensitive issue because many respondents knew that strangers came from the cities seeking girls for the Indian prostitution trade. The interviewers in this area were reluctant to ask about trafficking, fearing that the respondents would suspect them of being traffickers; and indeed many household heads and respondents did suspect them and declined to answer the question. In Dailekh, respondents did not understand the words *chelibeti* (girls/women) and *bechbikhan* (selling). The interviewers there reworded the question as follows: "Girls are taken and sold elsewhere. Have you heard about it?" Some Dailekh respondents then asked, "Why are girls sold in Bombay? And what do they do after being sold?" Most respondents in Dailekh had no knowledge of the prostitution trade in Bombay.

Have you ever used tobacco, alcohol, or drugs? Are you currently using any of these?

The interviewers related different patterns of response in the rural and urban areas. Some of the male respondents at all the urban sites admitted to drug use. A few female respondents in Kathmandu reported that they smoked. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs may have been underreported in Lalitpur and Pokhara, where most of the female respondents did not readily

answer the question. In Birgunj and Biratnagar, respondents had knowledge about several types of drugs. In rural areas the respondents did not report alcohol or drug use, but both males and females reported heavy use of tobacco. Rural respondents did not consider marijuana to be an illicit drug; many rural Nepalese grow it and mix it with tobacco for daily use.

Do you often feel mentally depressed?

Many respondents, urban and rural, did not understand the term *manasik chinta* (mentally depressed). When interviewers substituted the term *pir* or *chinta* (worried), respondents easily understood it and answered without hesitation. Students reported feeling worried about passing their exams and about whether they would be able to continue their education. Illiterate respondents worried about obtaining good jobs and their future.

Challenges and Difficulties Experienced by the Field Staff

- In some communities affected by the rebels (particularly in Argakhachi, Kavre, and Banke), interviewers had trouble convincing residents that they were not themselves rebels. Interviewers were also physically threatened in those areas.
- In Dailekh and Saptari the interviews took place during in the monsoon season, and interviewers there faced a number of logistical challenges due to poor trails, landslides, and swollen river conditions.
- In Kavre, Mahottari, and Banke, where many people spoke several dialects, communication was a challenge, especially with female respondents.
- In Banke the Muslim community's custom of separating females from males made interviewing them difficult. Male interviewers were not allowed to see or talk to Muslim females, and therefore both female and male interviewers were needed to prepare the household lists.
- Female interviewers sensed that some villagers had negative attitudes toward them because they traveled with unrelated men and worked independently.
- Residents in many areas were tired of data collectors who requested information from them without offering any tangible assistance. For this reason, some people did not want to participate in the interview.

Comments and Suggestions from the Interviewers

- Most respondents were very interested in participating in the survey and wanted to know more about it. It would be desirable to provide survey participants with a brochure describing the purpose of the survey and the organizations involved in conducting it.
- To minimize the problem of noncooperation and nonresponse, it would be desirable to conduct two interviews simultaneously in the same household. The interviewers believed this would reduce the amount of interference from parents and other relatives, and that the refusal rate would be lower.
- The interviewers found interviewing 14- and 15-year-olds to be very uncomfortable. Young respondents did not answer many questions because they lacked personal experience and knowledge of the subjects they were being asked about.
- Some of the questions were not appropriate for respondents in remote and less-developed areas. They could not understand the questions because they had never been exposed to the subject material.
- The questionnaire was too long and should be shortened.

Summary and Conclusion

The feedback received from field staff revealed similar experiences during the interview process despite the differences between urban rural areas and between individual districts. All groups discovered discrepancies between both the cluster boundaries and the number of houses described in the Central Bureau of Statistics data and those they encountered in the sample clusters. All agreed that the eligible respondents (males and females, ages 14–22) were busy people, especially in the larger metropolitan areas. Many of urban respondents, who had greater access to educational opportunities than those in rural areas, were enrolled in school and in before- and after-school courses, which limited their availability for interviews. Servants were especially difficult to interview because of their busy work schedules and frequent interruptions by employers. In many cases, interviewers returned to a house two or three times in an effort to contact the prospective respondent.

Field staff in several rural communities were met with distrust and even hostility by some residents, who suspected them of being rebel activists. Most interviewers, however, received excellent support from Village Development Committee members and ward members, who assured villagers

of the survey's legitimacy. In most cases the field staff had little trouble in contacting household heads and respondents, and few interviews were interrupted. The majority of households wanted to participate and were very cooperative. Many residents did not understand the sampling process or the reasons why every home was not interviewed. Many household heads and respondents expected compensation for the interview. Some household heads misreported the ages of their young family members in order to enable them to participate in the survey, hoping to receive compensation or benefits for their families. Respondents had no hesitation in reporting the number of rooms and household goods in their homes, but they often had trouble in correctly counting them.

In contrast with rural areas, in urban areas the interviewers occasionally encountered uncooperative household heads when listing the residents and assets in a household. In Birgunj and Pokhara, some household heads were distrustful of the survey objectives, suspecting that information was being collected for tax purposes. After recording information provided by the household head, the interviewer requested permission to interview the eligible respondents. This request was sometimes met with suspicion from the respondent's parents. A few parents, feeling uncomfortable that their children were being asked personal questions, closely monitored the interview. Because it is not customary in Nepal for adolescents to be interviewed, some parents believed their child would have little information to contribute to a survey questionnaire.

The interviewers found that the amount of time required to administer the questionnaire, which ranged from 40 minutes to two hours, depended upon the educational level of respondents. They encountered greater numbers of illiterate respondents in the rural districts than in the urban districts, and this impeded data collection. Educated respondents had no difficulty understanding the majority of the survey questions. Illiterate and less educated respondents, in contrast, required an involved explanation of many of the questions and often did not understand concepts, despite clarifications by the interviewer. Questions that required the respondent to agree or disagree with a series of statements were especially challenging, as many respondents had never encountered questions in that format.

In some rural areas, language barriers impeded the interview process. For instance, in Kavre many residents spoke only Tamang, and interviewers found it difficult to ask questions and receive information accurately. In other

districts the interviewers used Awadhi, Hindi, and Maithili to talk with participants.

Several sections of the questionnaire proved embarrassing for both interviewers and respondents to discuss. All interviewers agreed that the section on puberty was the most difficult topic for the respondents, most of whom were embarrassed by the topic. The majority of respondents exhibited shyness and embarrassment when asked questions about love, sexuality, family planning, and abortion. The topic of drug use and sexually transmitted infections produced an uncomfortable situation for both interviewers and respondents.

When respondents were asked whether they had a boyfriend or girlfriend, female respondents, especially in rural areas, hesitated to respond, perhaps owing to cultural traditions that do not encourage romantic relationships prior to marriage. Their answers varied according to the customs and social norms of their community. In Ilam, where girls tend to delay marriage, female respondents hesitated to answer this question and were thought to be untruthful in their responses. In Dailekh and Banke, where parents arrange their children's marriages when the children are born or are very young, female respondents had no understanding of the concept of boyfriend. Male respondents, however, were generally comfortable answering this question.

Asking respondents about their sexual behavior was very difficult for female interviewers, who felt especially uncomfortable posing such personal questions to unmarried female respondents. Unmarried female respondents' reactions to the questions ranged from embarrassment to anger that an interviewer would even think that an unmarried woman would be sexually active. The majority of respondents could not answer the question about the female reproductive cycle, even after having the question clarified.

There was great variance in respondents' knowledge of contraceptive methods and use. Most rural respondents had little knowledge of family planning methods or sexually transmitted infections. Respondents of both sexes did not know the difference between AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and required a lengthy explanation before attempting to answer the question.

When respondents had difficulty discussing sexuality topics, the interviewers inferred that their answers were not very reliable. Younger respondents often would avoid looking directly at the interviewer or would say they did not know the answer. The interviewers reported that many unmarried respondents, even those in urban areas, had little or no knowledge of human

sexuality, the female reproductive cycle, or family planning methods, despite having higher education levels than respondents in rural areas. Those questions caused embarrassment and discomfort in the interview for both the respondent and interviewer, and the interviewers considered them to be inappropriate for younger respondents. So strongly did they feel about the inappropriateness of those questions that some interviewers omitted them when interviewing young, unmarried respondents. This was the most discussed topic in the debriefing sessions, and it was of great concern to many interviewers.

The questions about the mass media aimed at eliciting information about respondents' exposure to educational media and modern technology. Respondents who could not read or had never seen television or videos had difficulty understanding questions. Those living in areas where people had radios could conceptualize other types of media, but those in more remote areas found the questions puzzling and had few suggestions to give.

The insights gained from the debriefing sessions have implications for the interpretation and analysis of the NAYA Survey data. The responses to sensitive questions must be interpreted with caution. In particular, the respondents' educational level and gender were found to be critical factors that affected their responses to such questions. Aside from the few sensitive questions, however, the interviewers believed that responses to the majority of the questions came "from the heart" and that most of the adolescents and youth felt good about being asked about their experiences and perceptions concerning health issues.

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Note

1. An exception is Govindasamy and Vaessen's (1997) report of a study conducted in the context of the 1996 Nepal Family Health Survey. Govindasamy and Vaessen referred to the field interviewers as "informed respondents."

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NEPAL'S EXPERIENCE FOR CURRENCY UNIFICATION

**An examination of exchange rate performance for the
Nepalese vis-à-vis Indian currency with special reference
to the period of 1956 - 1960**

Nephil Matangi Maskay

Introduction

Nepal is a kingdom located in South Asia. It lies on the southern lap of the Himalayas occupying an area of approximately 147,181 square kilometers being roughly rectangular in shape with average width of 193 kilometers from north to south and about 885 kilometers from east to west. It is a country with diverse geography and climates. This diversity is also reflected in the veritable mosaic of ethnic groups that is a unique reflection of Nepal being at the crossroad of two great civilizations, i.e. the Indian and the Chinese civilization.

While Nepal geographically borders two countries, the harsh and foreboding Himalayan mountain range in the north contrasts with the rest of three sides including the open terrain to the south and has resulted in greater Indian, versus Chinese, influence. This influence has resulted in a close relationship with India that can be traced back thousands of years. The end result of this close relationship can be seen in the shared culture and heritage as well as the similarity in language between both nations.

Given close ties between the two nations, it is not surprising that there has also been a close economic relation. Since time immemorial there has been trading in the region. During the early part of the present Shah historical period which commenced in 1768, almost all trade occurred with India.^{1,2} This resulted in common use of both the Nepalese Currency (NC) and Indian Currency (IC), especially along the border regions, and characterized a period of dual currency of partial IC-ization in Nepal. However, by 1966 this period

of dual currency of partial IC-ization was “eliminated” with only the NC remaining in Nepal as the sole legal tender (NRB 1996).

This paper explores the critical period in Nepal’s financial history of 1956-1960, through an examination of the NC-IC exchange rate performance, which significantly contributed to the goal of a unified currency in Nepal. This period commenced with the establishment of the Central Bank of Nepal, the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), in 1956 and includes a discussion of the policies of the Nepalese Government that led to stability in the NC-IC exchange rate in 1960. This stability in NC-IC exchange rate facilitated the expansion of the NC area and laid the crucial foundation for the elimination of the dual currency period of partial IC-ization in Nepal.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section discusses selected characteristics of the Nepalese financial environment during the mid-twentieth century while the third section describes the Nepalese exchange rate performance vis-à-vis the IC with special reference to 1956 - 1960 period. The fourth section puts forward some observations while the last section summarizes and concludes.

Characteristics of the Nepalese Financial Environment during the mid-twentieth century

The structure of the Nepalese financial system had not changed drastically over the course of the first half of the century and can arguably be described as having been unchanged over the last centuries. The Nepalese financial environment can be characterized as being underdeveloped. While the lack of national income data prevents the standard measure of examining the monetization of the economy, an alternative proxy, is taken from the perspective of number of financial institutions existing at that time.³ The first modern financial institution in Nepal with a wide range of banking and financial activities, Nepal Bank Limited (NBL), was established only in 1937.⁴ NBL had a number of bank branches in major cities of Nepal that was extended to 12 in 1956 and further up to 23 in 1960. Likewise in 1957 the Industrial Development Corporation came into existence, which was subsequently converted to Nepal Industrial Development Corporation (NIDC) in 1959. However, NIDC was simply a credit institution and thus did not play the role of financial intermediation by also mobilizing deposits. Some comparative ratios of Nepal, UK and India demonstrate the level of financial development at that time. Nepal had 400,000 persons per bank branch while

it was 4,000 and 70,000 for UK and India respectively. Additionally, the per capita deposit at that time in Nepal was NRs. 8, or less than a dollar, compared to 367 dollars for UK and 9 dollars for India (NRB 1961). These facts therefore suggest that the Nepalese financial system was in the embryonic stage and thus the description of the Nepalese economy being "predominantly a cash-economy" is appropriate (NRB 1965).

Due to the low level of Nepalese financial development resulting in a limited number of Nepalese financial institutions, access to NC for even the basic transaction purpose was difficult. The porous and open border with India coupled with the significant degree of trade interaction with that country, forced the acceptance of use of IC in Nepal.⁵ The greater use of IC may also reflect the relatively greater level of commercialization, industrialization and financial development of the Indian economy vis-à-vis the Nepalese economy during that early time especially after the overthrow of British rule in India. Thus the dual currency period of partial IC-ization existed in Nepal for many years with this scenario being a manifestation of typical geographical constraints faced by the country. It is interesting to observe that the IC was not used equally throughout Nepal and may have even had separate currency areas: in Kathmandu, NC was prevalent while outside Kathmandu, IC was prevalent (Tuladhar 1955). Nonetheless, during the dual currency period of partial IC-ization in Nepal, both the NC and IC largely existed side by side.

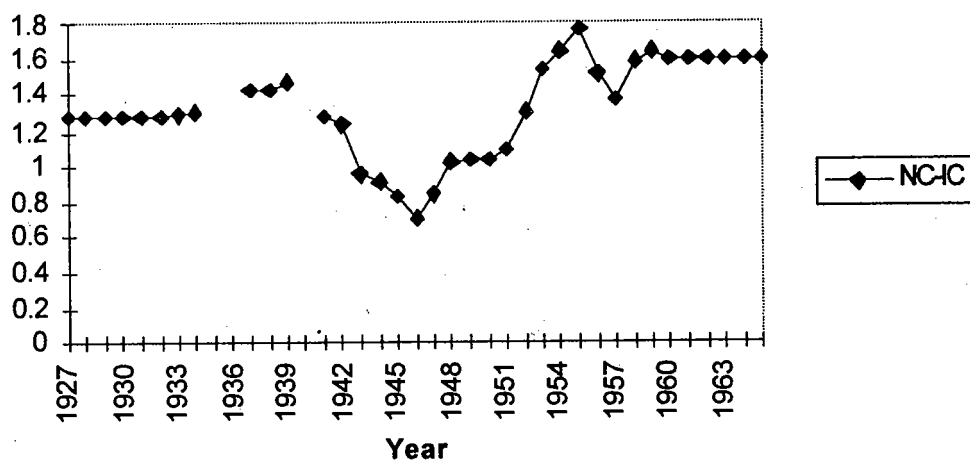
As both currencies largely existed side by side, the relative pricing between both currencies was essential for imparting confidence in both the NC and the IC. While the actual exchange rate experience will be described in the next section, some elaboration on the mechanics will be made by which the NC-IC exchange rate was arrived at. The NC-IC exchange rate was market determined which was free of government control. It was being operated by private individuals, popularly known in Nepal as *Tankadharis* or *Sarafis*, along with Marwaris (merchants of Indian origin) until 1960. In other words, up to 1960 a flexible, market determined NC-IC exchange rate existed which, in general, is assumed to accurately reflected the market exchange value (Shrestha 1966).

Nepal's exchange rate performance vis-à-vis the IC with special reference to the period of 1956 - 1960

The prior section suggested that the NC-IC exchange rate was market determined. Because of this, the NC-IC exchange rate performance during that

time is assumed to accurately capture the changes in expectations and confidence on the NC and IC. While the period 1956-1960 is given special focus, both the preceding and post-period are also viewed. The graphical presentation of NC-IC exchange rate for 1927 - 1965 is given below (five year prior and post the 1932 - 1960 period are arbitrarily chosen to indicate contrast in exchange rate volatility):

NC-IC Exchange Rate Movement 1927-1965



Note:

1. Data are Annual Averages obtained from Pant (1964) for 1927-1959. Published data on the NC-IC exchange rate began in 1926, the year the official government paper, *Gorkha Patra*, began publication.
2. Data for 1935, 1936 and 1940 of NC-IC exchange rate were not available.
3. Data on NC-IC exchange rate are obtained from Quarterly Economic Bulletin of NRB for 1960 - 1965.

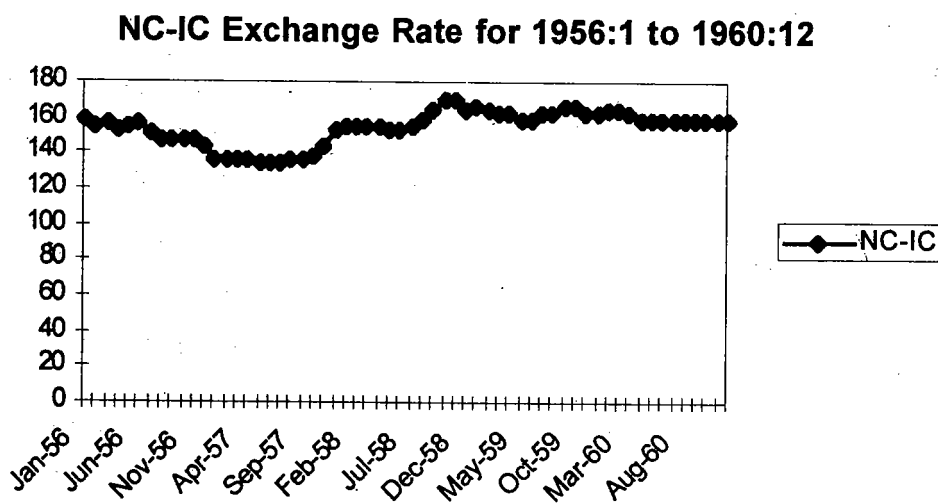
Pre-1956

Immediately preceding 1956, for the period up to 1932, there was volatility in the NC-IC exchange rate which appears to have commenced from the liberalized economic policy of Prime Minister Juddha S. J. B. Rana and seem to have accelerated after the great Kathmandu earthquake in 1933; prior to 1932 the NC-IC exchange rate had been fixed at 128 NC to 100 IC in 1877 by the Rana Prime Minister Ranoddip Singh (Hamal 1994).⁶ From 1932, there appears to be four distinct trends in the NC-IC exchange rate as seen in the graph above⁷: a period of NC-IC depreciation (1932 - 1939) which was

likely driven by the deficit in the trade balance resulting from liberalization of import of luxury goods such as motor cars, radio sets and alcohol; a period of NC-IC appreciation (1940 - 1946) with the occurrence of the Second World War and the precipitous decline in confidence of the IC; a period of NC-IC depreciation (1947 - 1950) from the increase in government expenditures and the decline in IC remittances of Nepalese soldiers⁸; and finally a period of sharp NC-IC depreciation (1951 - 1955) where there was an acceleration in the decline of the NC-IC exchange rate which resulted from increases in development expenditure of the Nepalese Government and reached a high of 185 NC for 100 IC in June 1955.

1956-1960

It was in 1956 when the Nepalese Government acknowledged the threat of an unstable exchange rate resulting from the dual currency period of partial IC-ization and therefore attempted to stabilize the NC-IC exchange rate and, through it, move towards the goal of a unified currency (NRB 1996). It may be because of this that the subsequent period of NC-IC exchange rate, while volatile, did not have a definite trend.⁹ This can be seen visually in the chart below:



Note:

1. Data are obtained from Pant (1964) and Shrestha (1966).

The political resolve was matched by concrete action on the part of the Nepalese Government. A definitive example of this was the establishment of

the NRB in April 1956 by Act of 1955 (hereafter simply called the NRB Act). In the start of the preamble to the NRB Act, it states:

Whereas it is expedient to insure proper management for the issue of Nepalese currency notes, to make proper arrangement for the circulation of Nepalese currency throughout the Kingdom and to stabilize the exchange rates of the Nepalese currency in order to ensure the convenience and economic interests of the general public;..

The commencement in the preamble to the NRB Act gives emphasis to both increasing circulation and confidence of NC as well as maintaining exchange rate stability. Likewise in 1956 the Nepalese Government pursued additional actions to reach the stated goal such as announcing that it would pay half of the salaries of government employees living in the IC area in NC. Nonetheless, the situation of having IC predominant in Nepal still existed and can be seen in 1957 where "72.9 percent of total deposits and 81.1 percent of total credits in Nepal Bank Limited (the only commercial bank of the country at that time) were denominated in Indian currency" (Demetriades and Luitel, 1996, p. 357).

However, during the process of managing the exchange rate, the Nepalese Government deliberately attempted to place the value of NC-IC far below the market-determined exchange rate. This dual exchange rate policy for NC-IC was aimed to facilitate the procurement of "approved goods" such as essential commodities, books, medicines and airline tickets (NRB 1961).¹⁰ But, the NC-IC exchange rate was utilized in both ways. For example, the Ministry of Finance announced that NC would henceforth be accepted at all government treasuries in the Tarai districts for payments of government revenue. In this way, the Nepalese Government decided to accept taxes for fiscal year 1956/57 and 1957/58 from Tarai at the rate of 128 NC for 100 IC; this was considerably below the market rate of NC 142 and NC 147 respectively for 100 IC. While the official rate for tax payments from Tarai was subsequently revised to 150 NC for 100 IC, it again lagged the market rate, which was then 164 NC for 100 IC.

These policies were inconsistent with the economic environment prevailing at that time. This was because the rate set by the Nepalese Government was substantially different from the market rate, which proved the opportunity for currency arbitrage. This can be seen from the above

example of government directive to collect land revenue at the official rate. However collection of revenue was done indirectly through representatives called *Zamindars*. These *Zamindars* collected the revenue in IC at the official rate and sold it in Kathmandu at the market rate pocketing the difference as windfall profit (Pant 1964).¹¹ This policy of having a dual exchange rate was subsequently canceled with massive losses of IC reserves at NRB (NRB 1961).

It was in August 1959 that both the necessity for a single currency and the need for greater confidence in NC were realized. Thus an Exchange Management Committee was formed by Ministry of Finance with the purpose of proposing to the Nepalese Government measures to achieve exchange rate stability and a unified currency. This resolve had in part a political genesis where the NC government publicly committed to a unified Nepalese currency that can most visibly be seen in the Finance Minister's Budget Speech for 1959/60 (as reported by Pant (1964)). This climaxed in 1960 by enunciation of policies as (NRB 1961):

HMG declared NC fully convertible into IC at the rate of IRs. 100 for NRs. 160 .. At the same time, IC accounts maintained by HMG with the Bank were converted into NC accounts. All internal dues, except those under contracts and royalties, payable to HMG, were collected in NC only and all internal disbursement of HMG were also made in NC only all over the country with the exception of five districts where the facility did not exist at that time. An Act passed in 1957 with a view to extending circulation of NC was enforced .. it made non-acceptance of NC in any kind of transaction illegal."

The measures bolstered the confidence in NC. These were also matched by policies of the Nepalese Government to put forth both a more conservative monetary policy and a fiscal policy that aimed at raising government revenue faster than the projected increase in expenditures (Pant 1964). Further, the Nepalese Government put forth legal measures for active enforcement of the Act passed in 1957 to increase the circulation of Nepalese currency, which was further addressed in 1960 by the promulgation of the Act to control foreign exchange transaction.¹² The later act is elaborated since transaction of foreign exchange was now regulated through authorized dealers "who must act under the general or special rules or orders laid down by the Nepal Rastra

Bank" with foreign exchange transactions, other than with authorized dealers, being "prohibited" (NRB 1961). Also, to facilitate exchange of NC to IC and vice versa, NRB opened its branches in different part of the country that, by July 1960, included 3 branches, 5 sub-branches, 9 exchange depots and 1 exchange counter along with a number of *Ghumti* (moving) counters (NRB 1961 and 1996). These measures increased the circulation of, and the confidence in, the NC ultimately resulting in limitation of the volatility of NC-IC exchange rate movement. While no explicit data are available, the double-digit growth of NC money supply during the period accompanied by insignificant inflation suggests that a large part of the money supply growth was absorbed by substitution of IC for NC (NRB 1961).¹³ Importantly, these measures set the foundation for the attainment of the target for a unified currency in Nepal.

Post-1960

From 1960 till the present there has been stability in the NC-IC exchange rate. This stability reflected confidence in the relative value of NC and IC and facilitated expansion of the NC area. Further, the first NC-IC exchange rate change, an appreciation from 160 NC to 101 NC for 100 IC, took place on 6 June 1966. This was a critical blow to IC holdings and resulted in a sharp loss of confidence in IC. This therefore accelerated the use of NC and led to a unified currency in Nepal in 1966 (NRB 1996).¹⁴ It should be noted that while Nepal's exchange rate policy has gone through different phases, the NC-IC exchange rate has essentially remained pegged (Maskay, 2000). That is, there have been only seven adjustments in the exchange rate - roughly one every five and a half years (NRB, 2000) - with the last one having occurred on 1 February 1993. The stability in the exchange rate had been a crucial element in maintaining confidence in NC.

Some Observations

The preceding experience of the NC-IC exchange rate indicate that the objective of attaining stability in the NC-IC exchange rate, and thereby moving closer to the goal of a unified currency, had been achieved. This resulted in the delivery of confidence in the NC and thus the "elimination" of the dual currency period of partial IC-ization in Nepal (NRB 1996). This is a crucial achievement in the development of Nepalese financial history and warrants some observations.

A first observation is that the NC-IC exchange rate during the 1927 to 1965 period in general appears to have been driven by the demand and supply for those currencies. That is, with greater demand for NC, or alternatively the greater supply of IC, this resulted in an appreciation of NC-IC exchange rate and vice versa.¹⁵ It seems also that during the dual currency period of partial IC-ization, there occurred forms of both asset and currency substitution. That is, asset substitution (i.e. using the IC as a store of value) occurred throughout the period especially with no easy availability of NC outside the Kathmandu Valley (Hamal 1994). Currency substitution occurred with both the expansion of NC area, which accelerated after the establishment of NRB in 1956, and high and variable inflation in both Nepal and India.¹⁶

A curious aspect during the 1956 - 1960 period was the volatility, or the lack thereof, of the NC-IC exchange rate. Given the unstable situation in Nepal during the multi-party period of the 1950's which commenced in 1951 with a political regime shift from the autocratic Rana rule to the democratic rule guided by His late Majesty King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah, the present King's grandfather, it was expected that an unstable currency demand would result in massive volatility and depreciation of the NC-IC exchange rate (Pilbeam 1998). However, this was not the case as demonstrated by the relatively stable NC-IC exchange rate during the above-mentioned period. There are a number of possible explanations as to why this exchange rate experience occurred such as the underdeveloped financial (and thus currency) markets in Nepal that were unable to incorporate new and changing information. However, a more likely explanation is that both countries were simultaneously experiencing political upheaval and thus sending out similar information. In India great political upheaval was reflected in independence from the United Kingdom in 1947 and the developments thereafter. Because of this, it seems that the limited NC-IC exchange rate volatility resulted from the relative political stability between Nepal and India, although each having absolute political instability.

It is also interesting to examine the role of currency speculators. Currency speculation in Nepal has a long history, which can be seen by the actions of Kaji Narayan Bhakta in 1946 who often withheld supplies of IC in an attempt to influence the exchange rate in his own favor (Pant 1964). During the period of 1956 - 1960 currency speculation also played a part in accelerating the episode of NC-IC exchange rate crisis by money changers who arbitrated between the official and market exchange rates resulting in massive depletion of IC currency in Nepal. However, the currency speculation can be labeled as

stabilizing. This is because the speculation, which occurred during the 1956 - 1960 period, put pressure for the official exchange rate to move closer to the market exchange rate.

A final observation concerns the NC-IC pegged exchange rate policy implemented by the Nepalese Government that continues up to today. The fixidity of the exchange rate policy was appropriate given the dual currency situation of partial IC-ization, to stabilize expectations (this is consistent with many literature in this field such as that of Calvo and Vegh (1992)). This was all the more effective since it was supported by credible policies and actions of the Nepalese Government, as mentioned above. Further, the continuing stability of the NC-IC exchange rate gives evidences for the appropriate choice of the exchange rate, given the characteristic of limited controls on labor and capital mobility between both countries, which is partially reflected by the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, and significant Indian share of Nepalese trade (Maskay, 2000). In other words, the choice of the pegged Nepalese exchange rate vis-à-vis the IC was appropriate, both at that time and up to the present.

Summary and Conclusion

Nepal's experience for currency unification during the period of 1956 - 1960 is a significant episode in the country's financial history that significantly contributed to the goal for eliminating the dual currency period of partial Indian Currency (IC)-ization. This event was successful in part due to action by the Nepalese authorities, which simultaneously imparted confidence to the Nepalese Currency (NC) and increased circulation of the national currency. Both these results were supported by the appropriate choice of the pegged NC-IC exchange rate regime, which stabilized NC-IC exchange rate fluctuations and can be evidenced by its existence even up to today.

However, presently in Nepal there have been some disturbing trends. One disturbing trend is the increase in the amount of IC in Nepal (i.e. possibly a return to period of partial IC-ization); for example Sharma (1998) has estimated the presence of IC to be 40.72% of the overall business transactions in Nepal.¹⁷ While the reasons for this trend are not elaborated in great detail, they may be due to the larger volatility in the exchange rate of NC vis-à-vis other hard currencies.¹⁸ This volatility of the NC is imported from the volatility of IC vis-à-vis those hard currencies through the rigid exchange rate of NC-IC. This volatility of NC vis-à-vis other hard currencies has introduced

uncertainties for the future value of those hard currencies and may have been detrimental to Nepal's foreign trade (other than with India); this is all the more likely as Nepal does not presently have a well developed currency future's market. Because of this, there have been discussions to reassess the present exchange rate regime in favor of a flexible exchange rate regime (many examples such as IPRAD (2000)). The rationale for having a flexible NC-IC exchange rate is that with greater diversification in Nepal's trade pattern, a flexible exchange rate policy will allow the NC to adjust and accurately reflect its value with other currencies. However, the growing level of partial IC-ization suggests that a flexible NC-IC exchange rate may be unstable, via instability in currency demand, leading to a loss on confidence in NC and thus its implementation may be a repeat (i.e. *deja vu*) with the past NC-IC exchange rate instability. Because of this, moving in the direction for assessing Nepal's exchange rate policy vis-à-vis the IC necessitates an in-depth and comprehensive study.

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I would like to thank Keshav Prasad Acharya, Deependra Bahadur Kshetry, Sushil Ram Mathema, Professor Dr. Gunanidhi Sharma and Nara Bahadur Thapa for their precious and valuable comments on earlier version of the paper. The views expressed are the author's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Nepal Rastra Bank or any other author associated institutions. For any shortcomings, the usual disclaimers apply.

Notes

- 1 This reality for Nepal did not change but in the last quarter century where the trade with India has diminished from approximately 100% to provisionally 40% of *Nepalese* foreign trade in the 1999/2000 fiscal year (*Economic Survey* of His Majesty's Government Ministry of Finance, 2000/2001).
- 2 At this stage, mention should be made that trade with Tibet did occur however, due either to inherent barter system and perhaps data problems in the later period, this is not accurately reflected in the available trade statistics.
- 3 The earliest data on GDP at current prices are available only from 1961/62 that was then Rs. 3,682 million. With narrow money in July 1962 (July 1961) being 244 million (205 million) the ratio of financial development

at that time was 6.6% (5.6%). This figure, however, may underestimate the level of financial development since it does not include IC. Nonetheless, it can be concluded that the Nepalese economy was financially underdeveloped (NRB 1965).

- 4 While the first legal financial institution in Nepal was the establishment of the *Tejarath Adda* in 1877, it faced problems catering to the general needs of the population as it had the sole objective of providing credit only, with deposits not being mobilized (NRB 1996). Because of this, it can be argued that the first actual financial institution that played the important role of financial intermediation was Nepal Bank Limited, which was established in 1937.
- 5 While this situation suggests why the dual currency situation persisted for so long, a contrary explanation is given by Pant (1964, p.36) who states that "because of their (Rana's) investment and bank deposits in India, the Ranas found the dual currency period extremely convenient and made no effort to unify the Nepalese currency." In other words, this dual currency period may have facilitated the capital flight of the Ranas from Nepal to India.
- 6 Evidence suggests that there had been some fluctuations in NC-IC exchange rate however the relationship had been stable with practically no divergence between the official and market rates (Shrestha 1966).
- 7 This is also shown by simple statistical analysis given in Appendix 1.
- 8 Prior to 1932 the value had been maintained by the metallic value of the currency however the increasing use of paper money eliminated this anchor. For IC, paper currency was brought into circulation in the early 1860's in accordance with the Paper Currency Act of 1861. However, the issue of NC notes by *Sadar Mulukikhana Adda* in 1945 (NRB 1996) may have exacerbated the NC-IC exchange rate fluctuations as there was now no explicit value anchor for the NC as well as IC currency.
- 9 This can also be seen with all NC-IC exchange rate fluctuations over the period of January 1956 to December 1960 being in a relatively tight band of $\pm 6.67\%$ only.
- 10 This period is also described as the Exchange Subsidy Program of 1957 - 1957 by numerous authors such as Pant (1964) etc.
- 11 A simple numerical example will clarify this where the numbers were chosen arbitrarily for simplicity. If land tax was 128 NC, *Zamindars* would collect it, however in IC, at the official NC-IC exchange rate, which was 128 NC for 100 IC. Going to Kathmandu with 100 IC,

Zamindars would convert the 100 IC at the market rate for 142 NC. *Zamindars* would then pay the Nepalese Government 128 NC and pocket the difference of 14 NC as windfall profit.

- 12 This was later supplemented in 1962 with the Foreign Exchange (Regulation) Act.
- 13 The other source of non-inflationary monetary growth may be the monetization of the economy.
- 14 At this point, it is interesting to note that the appreciation of the NC-IC exchange rate to 101 NC for 100 IC appears to have been inconsistent with the economic fundamentals at that time. It resulted in a sharp decline in IC reserves with the balance of payments situation, in respect to India, becoming vulnerable and weak. This eventually resulted in a devaluation of the NC-IC exchange rate to 135 NC for 100 IC on December 6, 1967 (NRB 1996). However, the Nepalese government maintained this misaligned exchange rate for eighteen months by "administrative subtlety" (i.e. various fiscal, monetary, licensing and exchange rate measures) that mitigated the adverse effect of the appreciation. The developing level of the country's financial sector may have further facilitated this. Nonetheless, the excessive appreciation of the NC-IC exchange rate in 1966 may have reflected a preoccupation with pursuing the goal of a unified currency in Nepal (Maskay, 2000).
- 15 An example will clarify this. Given, *ceteris paribus*, a greater demand for IC to, say, finance educational expenditures, this shall lead to an increase in demand, and thus the price, of IC vis-à-vis NC and therefore a depreciation of the NC-IC exchange rate (Pilbeam 1998).
- 16 The concept of currency substitution is elaborated in many papers such as Calvo and Vegh (1992).
- 17 The significant presence of IC is also consistent with a preliminary report by NRB in this regard.
- 18 Another plausible reason may be partly due to the current political scenario resulting in bank branch closures especially in the rural areas of the country. This situation may have led to the more common use of the IC. This is also true due to the growing number of Nepali seasonal workers in India who return to Nepal with IC and need the facility to exchange IC to NC. Thus, this may be another plausible reason for the increasing prevalence of IC in Nepal.

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Appendix 1

These summary statistics are given below:

	1932 - 1960; Full Period	1932 - 1939; Sub-Period: Depreciation	1939 - 1946; Sub-Period: Appreciation	1946 - 1955; Sub-Period: Depreciation	1955 - 1960; Sub-Period: Mixed
Average	1.276827	1.373333	1.058571	1.201	1.582917
Median	1.3	1.375	0.96	1.065	1.59375
Standard deviation	0.289824	0.089368	0.278414	0.350886	0.129349
Volatility	0.226987	0.065074	0.263009	0.292162	0.081715

Note: 1. Volatility is calculated as the ratio of standard deviation to average.

The prior chart captures volatility in NC-IC exchange rates. However, it does not give a measure of direction of exchange rate changes. This is captured below :

	1932-1960; Full Period		1932-1939; Depreciation		1939-1946; Appreciation		1946-1955; Depreciation		1955-1960; Mixed	
# Depreciation	14	56%	4	80%	0	0%	8	89%	2	40%
# Appreciation	9	36%	0	0%	6	100%	0	0%	3	60%
# Constant	2	8%	1	20%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%
Total	25	100%	5	100%	6	100%	9	100%	5	100%

Note:

1. Data are obtained from Pant (1964) for 1926 - 1959. 2. Data for years of 1935, 1936 and 1940 are not available.
3. Data are obtained from *Quarterly Economic Bulletin* of NRB for 1960-1965.

The figures suggest consistency with the description given for those periods.

Appendix 2

NC-IC Exchange Rate for 1956:1 to 1960:12					
Month/Year	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
January	160	136	155	167	165
February	156	136	155	165	165
March	157	136	155	164	164
April	153	136	155	163	160
May	156	135	153	160	160
June	158	135	153	160	160
July	151	135	156	164	160
August	149	136	160	164	160
September	149	136	165	166	160
October	149	138	170	167	160
November	149	145	171	164	160
December	145	153	165	164	160

Source: Data are obtained from Pant (1964) and Shrestha (1966).

SOCIAL SCIENCES IN NEPAL

Krishna Hachhethu

Introduction

The "decline of history" in Nepal was the focus of an article in one daily paper (*Nepal Samachar Patra*) on August 29, 2001. Six months earlier, another daily carried a piece on an "empty in history class and history teacher turn[ing] into student of sociology" (*Kantipur* 2001, February 15). Both reports highlighted four specific problems: the unavailability of jobs for history post-graduates, the decline in the number of history students in Tribhuvan University (TU), an outdated curriculum, and the attraction of sociology/anthropology for students in higher education. The state of some other social science disciplines is not much different. The opinions expressed in a seminar on *Social Science in Nepal* illustrate the problems. It was claimed that "Political Science...has progressively lost its erstwhile charm and appeal" (Jaisawal and Amatya, 1997: 57) and that "research (economics) in Nepal is confined to feasibility studies and evaluation of projects and a few empirical analysis.... Academic research [is] confined to Ph.D. (and some times Master's) dissertation (Sharma 1997: 69), though the economics department still enrolls large numbers of students. While sociology/anthropology is an emerging discipline, most experts prefer acting as consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) than as serious academics. "For some, research is done for career or professional interests and for many others for making a living (Bhattachan 1997: 13). The above statements clearly show the erosion in the quality of social sciences in TU.

The monopoly of TU in higher education and research has recently been broken with the establishment of three new universities, but it has hardly improved the situation because none of these newly established institutions have introduced social sciences faculty. The mushrooming of private research centres and NGOs due to availability of foreign funds has certainly opened up new avenues and broadened the scope of social sciences research.

However, research work has largely been downgraded into report writing, creating an adverse impact on the academic environment of TU since most NGOs and private research centers rely heavily on its teachers and researchers.

The above brief sketch of the academic environment within and outside the university indicates that the state of social sciences research in Nepal is far from satisfactory. Why is it so? This paper will try to make a comprehensive assessment of research in the history, political science, economics, and sociology/anthropology of Nepal, considering these disciplines as the core of social science.

The paper consists of five sections. It begins with a brief review of the history of social sciences in Nepal. The second section identifies some major institutions in government, university, private research institutions and NGOs, which have produced social science knowledge, and analyses their research activities. Section three deals with a case study of two leading research centres in Nepal. The fourth section focuses on resources i.e. books, journals, libraries and funds of research. Finally, there are some recommendations for the improvement of social sciences research in the country.

Before I enter into the main subject, it will be relevant here to recall three major political events of Nepal, which have had a profound impact on the overall educational environment, particularly as regards social science subjects. The first is the advent of democracy in February 1951, which opened up an opportunity of education for the people. In the past during the oligarchic Rana regime (1846-1950), education was virtually prohibited except for the members of ruling family and other privileged groups. The open educational environment in the post-Rana period was stalled by a royal coup against democracy in December 1960. Though the newly established regimented partyless panchayat system expedited development in education, the regime, by its New Education Plan (NEP) of 1972, deliberately discouraged social science subjects. The situation changed after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990. The opening and expansion of new universities and research organizations outside the purview of government and TU are the most recent developments.

History of Social Sciences in Nepal

As mentioned above, the advent of democracy in 1951 provided a space for producing social science knowledge through teaching and research. For higher education in the pre-democracy period, Nepal had only one institution (Tri Chandra College, established in 1918), which had only a few students in each of the two separate faculties – art and basic science. Research was a completely uncovered area, though some Europeans¹, Indians² and Nepalis³ had published books on Nepali history before 1950. The situation changed after 1951. As a consequence of Nepal adopting an open-door policy after a century of isolation, a number of native and foreign scholars have become involved in producing social sciences knowledge, with Nepali academics mostly confined to teaching while foreigners on both teaching and research.

In the initial stage, except for the domination of Nepalis in the field of history, it was mainly foreign scholars who conducted research in the social sciences in Nepal. These foreign writers fall into two categories – Westerners and Indians. While explaining the interest of foreign researchers in Nepal a British scholar specializing in Nepali history and politics said, "Anthropologists and other social scientists have paid Nepal particular attention because of its rich ethnic and cultural diversity; because, since its opening-up in 1951, Nepal has allowed foreign researchers freer access than in other parts of the Himalayan region; and probably also because many researchers simply find it a congenial place to work (Whelpton 1990: XXIV). Another important reason behind the flow of Indian and American writers in the '60s-'70s, that reduced in succeeding decades, is the location of Nepal between China and India and its strategic importance in cold war politics at regional and international levels.

The contribution of foreign scholars was not only limited to research but also affected teaching. The spread of higher education, especially in the social sciences, was marked by the opening of several private colleges in the post-1951 period. Till 1972, three different types of colleges existed: university college, government college, and private college. Both the private and government colleges were affiliated with Patna University of India and followed its syllabus, creating a unique situation that Nepali history, politics, economy etc. were not included in teaching inside the country. The situation changed in 1959 when Nepal established a university of its own and the newly established TU introduced specifically Nepali content into higher education in the social sciences. The availability of some books on Nepal by

that time provided a rationale for this decision. Hugh Wood's bibliography published in 1959 included 1,300 books and articles on Nepal written in English ((Whelpton 1990: XXIV). The Indian influence, however, remained in one way or others. Despite Nepal's having her own university, the post graduate classes of all subjects under the arts faculty, including history, political science and economics, were run by Nepali and Colombo Plan Indian teachers. Indian universities trained the first generation of educated Nepalis, including university teachers.

Despite dependency on India and exclusion of research from TU's academic activities, the social sciences were dominant in the education of the country's future manpower, particularly for the bureaucracy, educational institutions and corporations. But the pre-eminence of social sciences could not long survive because of the state's active intervention against it. The social sciences in Nepal have been increasingly neglected since the government introduced the NEP in 1972 with its two major objectives:

- a) to produce citizens who, with full faith in the country and the Crown, would conduct themselves in accordance with the Panchayat System; and
- b) to meet the manpower requirements of development through the spread of scientific and technical education (Shah 1978: 38).

In pursuing the second objective of the NEP, TU created separate institutes in 1972-73 for each of the following subjects: forestry, agriculture and animal science, medicine, and engineering. In line with the state's policy of balanced development in all the five regions (Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western, and Far-Western) of the country, TU expanded the technical campuses in different localities. In addition to the state policy to promote vocational and technical education, the parents and students showed awareness in choice of subject. This subject consciousness led students to opt for courses that would better guarantee job availability. Till the '60s, Nepal did not have a significant problem of educated unemployment but over time it has become difficult for those educated in the social sciences to find jobs. This explains why a large number of students have been attracted to technical education. The state protection along with societal preference for technical education has naturally had an adverse effect on the social sciences. The figure of student enrollment in higher education could be taken as one indicator. In the '50s and the '60s the ratio between general education and technical education was roughly 80: 20, but had shifted to 63: 37 by 1977

(Malla 1979). At present the students in the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences constitute only 42 percent in the total 115,608 students of TU (Tribhuvan University 2001: 9).

Though the NEP was biased against the social sciences it did initiate research at the university. In the '70s TU established its own four specialized research centers: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (RECAST) and Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID), the first two being devoted to research in different fields of social science. This marked a switch from purely teaching-based to research-based social science knowledge production. The return of some TU-Colombo Plan teachers in the mid-'70s after obtaining their Ph.D. from different universities of India further contributed to the university's research and teaching capabilities. Thus, native university teachers gradually replaced the Colombo Plan Indian teachers.

Despite TU's conscious efforts to nurture social sciences research since the '70s, the priority was given to other fields. The collapse of the NEP in 1980 paved the way back to the British-Indian model of education but this did not bring any change in the state's patronage to technical education. However, despite constantly increasing its capacity to absorb more students in technical subjects, TU could not keep up with the societal demands for more student enrollment in technical education. Nor did it provide any incentive for the social sciences to divert the students' pressure for technical education. Instead, it escaped from the problem by granting permission to establish private campuses. During the '80s, several private campuses, most of them catering for Humanities and Social Sciences and some including Commerce as well, were established in different parts of the country.

A retrospective look at the evolution of the social sciences in Nepal will help to understand the changing trends and the focus of different disciplines. History is the oldest and perhaps the strongest of these and also one which has mainly been nurtured by native scholars. Overseas writers on Nepal history could be counted on the fingers⁴ and only a few Indian historians⁵ produced books, most of them concentrating on the diplomatic history of Nepal. Nepali historians were ahead when research opportunities opened after the political change in 1951.⁶ In the '50s, history writing became a fad in Nepal, more so than any other social science subject (Sharma 1974: 116). Writing political history remained the dominant trend but Mahesh Chandra Regmi ventured into a new area: the economic history of Nepal. The Italian

scholar G. Tucci was the catalyst in introducing research on regional history of Nepal. At the institutional level, *Itihas Sansodhan Mandal*, founded in the early '50s by experts in Jyotisa (traditional astrology/astronomy), Sanskrit, Newari and epigraphy, has been constantly engaged in history research since its inception. The Department of Archeology of the government and to some extent the Royal Nepal Academy have contributed to the genesis and evolution of research on Nepali history. Comparatively, the role of TU, both at individual and institutional levels, is least significant if the contribution made by CNAS is excluded. Serious research on history has continuously declined since the '70s.

The record of study/research in economics resembles that in history in two respects. One, there are only a few foreigners including some Indians who have done serious research on Nepali economy.⁷ Two, among native scholars/institutions concerned with economics, non-university sectors have produced more books and reports. There are just a few university teachers who have made noteworthy contributions in both teaching and research.⁸ Some economists from the TU and the government have also made a remarkable contribution to diversify the discipline in area-specific studies i.e. finance, trade, planning, rural development, regional planning etc.⁹ In general, however, faculty members of economics department have done hardly any serious academic research. One of the major reasons is that those who are highly qualified have always been picked up by the government and or by private consultancy offices and others are busy with project work rather than academic research.

Political science and sociology/anthropology are relatively more influenced by foreign scholars in terms of research production. Except for Bhuwan Lal Joshi who, as a co-author with Leo E. Rose, produced a comprehensive and highly scholarly book on post-Rana politics, the pioneer researchers on Nepali politics are Americans¹⁰ and Indians.¹¹ A few native writers¹² contributed by publishing books on the chronology of political development, political administration and the judicial system. A new trend has been evident since the late '70s when an independent scholar Rishikesh Shaha and a university teacher Lok Raj Baral began producing their own academic books on Nepali politics. This discipline, however, remained in constant difficulty, partly because of the decrease in interest by foreign scholars, including Indians, by the '80s (Onta 2001: 60-89). Another reason was the fear psyche of native political scientists under the regimented panchayat system. Among those who did Ph. D during the panchayat regime

(1960-1990), most of them selected foreign policy issues to avoiding the risk in their research. The *Nepali Journal of Political Science*, published from 1979 to 1983, showed this reality. Out of 29 articles published in the total six issues of this journal, papers on Nepali politics account for only three, the remainder being on Nepal's foreign policy, regional affairs, international relations and political theory. Similarly out of 10 papers in the 'Current Issue Series' brought out by *CNAS Forum*, nine articles are related to Nepal's foreign policy and South Asian Affairs and one on development. In contrast to the availability of arenas beyond the university for history and economic researchers, the scope of political science research was limited to the university structure till 1990. The situation changed after the restoration of democracy in 1990 but the Nepali political scientists, with few exceptions, show little sign of being able to adjust to new opportunities and responsibilities.

Sociology/anthropology is a relatively young discipline in Nepal, although rural sociology was introduced into courses in 1954 by a government-run training centre. The INAS (later renamed as CNAS) ran a programme of anthropology degrees (Master and Ph. D) by dissertation for a short time in the mid-'70s. Teaching of these two subjects, which come under one department in TU, started only in 1981. This discipline is, however, rich in research in terms of quality and numbers of books and authors. Sociology/anthropology of Nepal has two distinct features. First, unlike other social science subjects, this discipline is almost completely untouched by Indian researchers. Another feature is that research on Nepali sociology/anthropology has constantly been initiated and promoted by Western authors. Overseas scholars¹³ have made a remarkable contribution in exploring and expanding work in the discipline, primarily in the areas of ethnography, development and social change (Dahal 1984: 37-49). By the mid-60s, the native sociologists/anthropologists were also producing their own research works.¹⁴ Despite the general fruitfulness of the discipline, many faculty members of the sociology/anthropology department of TU have not done serious academic work mainly because of their indulgence in consultancy business outside the university.

Research by Nepali social scientists, particularly by university teachers, before 1990 was less than satisfactory. Part of the reason was the lack of institutional support from the government. Since the political environment in the university had always been hostile to the panchyat establishment, the government, on the one hand, tried to control research in the university and,

on the other hand, it attempted to strengthen research activities within the government structure. The late '60s and the '70s were the key period for setting up the government research and training centres. Notable among these were the Panchayat Training Centre, Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC), Agricultural Projects Service Centre (APROCS), Industrial Service Sector (ISC), Trade Promotion Centre (TPC) and Water and Energy Commission Sector Study (WECS). The National Planning Commission (NPC), Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), and Royal Nepal Academy (RNA) were encouraged to carry out more research projects. Besides, each of the major departments and ministries of the government set up their own research unit under the title of 'Policy Planning Wing.' The Centre for Panchayat Policy and Investigation (CPPI), set up inside the palace with the Crown Prince as its head, was the key controlling institution. This also conducted research secretly through hired university teachers and civil servants with the purpose of providing philosophical underpinning to the panchayat system. The major activities and research done by the government agencies were primarily directed towards providing policy inputs for development planning, not consciously motivated for the promotion of social science in Nepal.

Social Sciences Research Institutions

The post-1990 scenario for the social sciences was marked by some changes. The educational institutions are now largely free from regimentation and the government has reduced its role in research activities. The scope and opportunities for social sciences research have increased. Since the university has made no move to revive its research capabilities many university academics are seeking other avenues. Research by the private research centres and NGOs has become a new fashion owing to the availability of financial support from foreign donors. They have a lion's share in the research business including the production of books – irrespective of the quality – though many of them do not have their own research manpower and so rely on the university's human resources. The university teachers/researchers are providing services to outside organizations for their personal benefit not for the institutional enhancement of the university from which they draw their regular salary. Despite TU academics remaining the dominating actors in social sciences research, the failure of university system to utilize its manpower has benefited the NGOs.

University: The university is the centre of knowledge production. Of the total five universities in Nepal, TU offers courses in every subjects and it alone has taken responsibility for social sciences. The four other universities are Mahendra Sanskrit University in Dang, Purbanchal University in Biratnagar, Pachimachal University in Pokhara (all these are state-funded) and Kathmandu University (private) in Dhulikhel. TU is the biggest university and has five institutes (one each for science and technology, engineering, medicine, forestry, and agriculture and animal science), four faculties (humanities and social sciences, management, law, and education), and four research centres (CNAS, CEDA, RECAST and CERID). Apart from the 177 campuses affiliated with it, TU has 61 constituent campuses spread all over the country in which 115,608 students enrolled in 2001 (Tribhuvan University 2001: 9). This figure is around 80 percent of the total students in higher education. Among TU teaching organizations, the humanities and social sciences faculty is the largest one running 26 departments covering different subjects that can be broadly divided into three categories: language and literature, liberal arts, and social sciences.

Before coming to the main theme of the paper, one point that needs to be dealt with is the teaching environment in TU, particularly as it affects social science subjects. For this purpose I have taken the figures for student enrolment in Bhaktapur Campus and Kirtipur Campus, of which the former teaches intermediate and bachelor levels and the latter concentrates on post-graduate level only.

Table 1: Number of Student Enrolments at Different Levels of Social Science

	Bhaktapur Campus										Kirtipur Campus				
	IA (intermediate)					BA (Bachelor)					MA				
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
History	75	129	186	172	214	19	9	12	15	12	78	75	93	109	102
Political Science	121	206	320	307	308	47	17	29	22	23	188	185	166	287	383
Economics	333	267	335	240	219	76	87	185	108	127	990	568	819	993	653
Sociology/ Anthropology	X	X	X	X	X	116	117	210	162	210	201	146	125	175	185

Source: Official records of Bhaktapur Campus and Kirtipur Campus.

The total figure of student enrollment in Bhaktapur campus at IA level in the last five years shows a preference for economics and then for political science. History is the least popular subject and sociology/anthropology is not yet available at IA level in the university. The popularity of this last subject is clearly shown by the constant increase in numbers at BA level in the last five years. Economics has been reduced to second in popularity, and the number of students taking course in political science and history at this level were negligible. The gap among different subjects further intensifies if number of students in the last year of the BA in the five calendar years were counted: 3, 1, 2, 1, and 2 in history; 4, 2, 3, 2, and 5 in political science; 11, 11, 40, 18, and 29 in economics; and 19, 12, 50, 30, and 53 in sociology/anthropology respectively.

The figures for MA students in the last five years in Kirtipur Campus show the popularity of economics, followed by political science, sociology/anthropology and history. This picture, however, does not reflect the whole story, especially about the emergence of sociology/anthropology as dominant subject in terms of student enrollment. The sociology/anthropology department of Kirtipur Campus admitted a record number of 800 students in 1994 but numbers then declined because the quota for new students was fixed at 100 despite the fact that around 900 students sat the entrance examination in 2000. As the department limited admissions, students dispersed to other campuses, which provide more places for MA students in this subject. Tri Chandra Campus admitted around 200 students of MA in sociology/anthropology in 1995 when it started the post-graduate class. Numbers taking an MA in this subject in Tri Chandra Campus increased to 4,700 in 2001.

Judging from a comparative perspective, the social sciences as a whole are the least attractive in terms of students' choice for their higher education. In contrast to the '80s, when the dominant was the opening of several private campuses teaching humanities and social sciences, most of the private campuses mushrooming after 1990 have been providing courses in management, with a few offering basic science, engineering and medicine. Over time, the number and percentage of students taking courses in science, engineering and medicine have rapidly increased in both TU and other universities. Above all, the dominant subject is management to which all the three newly established universities and several private campuses have given priority. TU alone has 29,432 management students at different levels for 2001 (Tribhuvan University 2001: 9). This trend will continue for the near

future as shown by the figure that out of 74,421 students of 'ten plus two' (equivalent to certificate level), 50 percent have taken a management course (Khatri 2001).

The above statistics raise three major questions. One, why is the new generation of students more interested in joining private campuses rather than public campuses? Two, why are students more interested in other subjects than in the social sciences? Three, among the different social science subjects why are some more attractive than others?

The answer to question two stems from the bottom line: education in Nepal has increasingly become job oriented. Engineering and medicine have long been popular because of easy availability of 'prestigious' jobs for their graduates. On the benefit of taking management course, Kundan Dutta Koirala, Dean of Faculty of Management of TU, states, "...management graduates from TU are easily absorbed by the growing market economy. The management programs are market-tailored to a large extent.... The demand for management graduates in the areas of marketing and finance is far more than its supply (Koirala 1999: 69). The same logic applies to question three, the popularity of sociology/anthropology compared to other social science subjects. To quote K. B. Bhattachan, "Due to ever-growing activities of international non-governmental organizations in Nepal and their increasing demand for sociology and anthropology graduates to work with them the discipline has become very glamorous." (Bhattachan 1997: 17). Another reason for student pressures on sociology/anthropology is that all students who passed diploma level irrespective of their disciplinary backgrounds are eligible to join the post-graduate class in this subject. Similarly, graduates from management can join the MA in economics. The recent introduction of a post-graduate course in law has adversely impacted on the student enrollment for MA in political science, which once attracted law graduates. The history department has recently released restriction to the graduate of other subjects to join in its MA course since last three years but it has not impacted to the decline of student enrolment in this subject.

To respond to the first question, I will briefly highlight one problem facing mainly by central departments of Kirtipur Campus. Both teachers and students of post-graduate classes have long appeared part-timers. Students regularly attending class in all the four subjects (history, political science, economics, and sociology/ anthropology) hardly exceed 20 percent of total students enrolled. Most teachers are overburdened by their involvement in other activities outside the TU – in politics or in NGOs or in private

campuses. An erosion of standards in social science is linked to the general decline in the quality and standard of higher education throughout TU (Sharma and Khatri 1997: 3). Acknowledging the problem, the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences says, "...our educational environment is dirty" (Manandhar 1997: 40).

Coming to the main thrust of this section – social sciences research in TU – I will now briefly touch upon the three different types of institution within TU which, apart from their other responsibilities, are more or less involved in social sciences research: academic-eum-administrative offices, teaching departments of Kirtipur Campus, and research centres.

The role of TU Research Division, which once undertook multiple responsibilities i.e. publication, research grant, affiliation etc., has recently been reduced to the single assignment – publication of the university' annual *TU Journal*, which first appeared in 1964 and includes articles of all subjects from history to bio-diversity. The newly established Centre for International Relations does not involve itself in research work except for granting affiliation to foreign researchers and networking with foreign universities. The Office of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences is one of the institutions within TU with greater responsibility to promote teaching and research activities. In addition to its constant involvement in improving the syllabus of the different subjects under its jurisdiction through conducting training, workshops and seminars, its roles of granting Ph.D. degrees and allocating research funds are noteworthy. The Dean's Office runs the Ph.D. program in collaboration with individual teachers of central departments of Kirtipur Campus.

The potential significance of Ph.D. research in strengthening the academic environment inside the university and the nation as a whole goes without saying. Some facts and figures of the last 30 years (1970 to 2000), brought out by a previous study, reveal the real situation. According to this, 1155 TU staff (most of them Ph.D. candidates) took study leave, 75-80% of these being teaching staff. They included 248 Ph.D. candidates who registered in the Office of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences of TU. But TU has awarded Ph.D. degree to total 153 persons of different subjects. (Subedi 2000: 2). This reveals two things. One, foreign universities, including Indian universities, have produced more Nepali Ph.Ds. than has TU. Two, the big gap between the number of persons registered for Ph.D. and the number of persons who completed Ph.D. shows a tendency to misuse study leave. This problem will remain in the near future, since TU authorities

have never taken actions against the abusers of study leave nor do they consider this a serious issue.

The production of Nepali Ph.Ds. from foreign universities in greater number reveals the fact that TU is relatively unattractive to aspiring Ph.Ds. One of the main reasons is the lack of funds. Of course TU has been offering grants under the "faculty development program" for Ph.D. researchers since 1979 but the total number of persons who have taken advantage of this over the last 21 years has been only 240 (Subedi 2000:3). The bias against social sciences is too obvious for two reasons. Firstly, the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences receives a quota of only two seats for TU's Ph.D. scholarships. Secondly, the present Dean has given the lowest priority to history, political sciences, economics, and sociology/anthropology while nominating persons for a Ph.D. scholarship. He argues that there are many other departments under his faculty, which have few or no Ph.Ds. Another institution promoting Ph.D. research through providing scholarship is University Grant Commission (UGC) which – in the last five years from the time of its foundation in 1995 – has granted fellowship to total 67 Ph.D. researchers, including 7 from history, 3 from political science, 7 from economics, and 1 from sociology/anthropology.¹⁵ Besides, 265 foreign Ph. D. fellowships on different subjects were awarded to Nepalis through TU channels in the last ten-year from 1990 to 2000 (Acharya and Parajuli 2001:138).

The Dean Office of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty is involved in research in other ways. Over the last four years, it has run a program of mini-research to be conducted by TU teachers belonging to this faculty, providing a grant of around NRs 25,000 per person. The Dean's office usually selects 20 proposals every year under this scheme. But the Dean has had the bitter experience that nearly 50 percent of teachers receiving the funds have not yet completed their work. Moreover, little of the work actually completed has met the standard set by the Dean's Office

Before discussing in detail the research and teaching activities of TU social scientists, I present their social and academic profiles on the assumption that these things may have some impact on the research agenda and environment.

Table 2: Social Profile of University Social Sciences Teachers/Researchers

	Gender		Religion					Caste/Ethnic Groups					
								Hill					Tarai
	Total	Male	Femal	Hindu	Buddhist	Muslim	Brahmin	Chhetri	Newar	HE/TG	TCG	TE/TG	
Central Departments	103	96	7	93	2	1	58	12	18	5	10	-	-
History	21	19	2	19	2	-	11	5	5	-	-	-	-
Political Science	20	19	1	18	1	1	9	3	4	1	3	-	-
Economics	41	39	2	38	3	-	25	2	8	1	5	-	-
Sociology/ Anthropology	21	19	2	18	3	-	13	2	1	3	2	-	-
CNAS*	20	18	2	16	4	-	8	2	8	2	-	-	-
CEDA*	34	26	8	29	4	1	11	4	15	1	3	-	-
Total	157	140	17	138	17	2	77	18	41	8	13	-	-

HE/TG: Hill Ethnic/Tribal Group, TCG: Tarai Caste Group (Included two Muslims), TE/TG: Tarai Ethnic/Tribal Group;
DC: Dalit Caste.

* Excluding Executive Directors as they are already included under their parent department.

Source: Interview with some academic and administrative staff of above mentioned departments and research centers.

The table reveals the male domination in social sciences in TU as females constitute only 10 percent. Most TU social scientists are Hindus and 11 percent are Buddhist. Hill Brahmins and Newars – which constitute only 12 percent and 5 percent respectively in total population of Nepal – predominate with 49 percent and 26 percent respectively. This data more or less corresponds to national figure of educational attainment at graduate and above level that Brahmin constitutes 34.1 percent and Newar 23.7 Percent (Gurung 1998: 127). Other caste groups, including Chhetris, are less numerous; and the complete absence of Dalits (so called 'untouchables') is also notable. These figures more or less match the ratio of power distribution in the politics and administration of Nepal. The question is: does under-representation of marginalized sections of society in the university have an impact on setting the research agenda and on other academic activities? This is a debatable issue but not much debated by TU social scientists. For example, apart from CEDA's intensive study on the status of Nepali women in the '70s, gender issues have never had priority in either teaching or research in the university. For the native social scientists at TU, questions related to Dalit castes, hill ethnic groups, tarai community remain as almost untouched areas though a number of foreign researchers have produced volumes of books and articles on these issues. These agendas have been taken up for a twin purpose – research and advocacy – mostly by NGOs and other organizations, which are campaigning for the cause of disadvantaged sections of society. The lobby and advocacy work rather than research concerns have been instrumental in their focus on a number of social, economic and political problems of the country.

Table 3: Academic Profile of University Social Science Teachers/Researchers

Institutions	Total academic staff	Numbers and sources of Ph.Ds.				Research books			Position		
		Total	Nepal	India	Other	Single	Joint	Edited	Prof.	Reader	Lecturer
Central Departments	103	54	11	27	16	32	24	14	35	34	34
History	21	12	5	6	1	13	7	2	7	10	4
Political Science	20	11	3	7	1	8	6	5	11	7	2
Economics	41	22	3	11	8	7	6	3	13	15	13
Sociology/Anthropology	21	9	-	3	6	4	5	4	4	2	15
CNAS*	20	9	2	3	4	12	8	2	3	9	8
CEDA*	34	11	-	7	4	5	4	6	2	12	20
Total	157	74	13	37	24	49	36	22	40	55	62

* Excluded executives as their profile accounted to the department they belong to.

Source: Interview with some academic and administrative staff of above mentioned departments and research centers.

Out of total 157 social scientists working on four different subjects (history, political science, economics, sociology/anthropology) in Kirtipur Campus and two research centres, 40 are Professors, 55 Readers and 62 Lecturers. Around 50 percent of the academics from each discipline and centre have a Ph.D. degree except for only 32 percent in CEDA. In total, the number of Ph. D. holders from Indian universities is highest (37), the lowest from Nepal (13). Those who received a degree from abroad are 24, most of them from American and British universities. Among 157 social scientists 49 have a sole-authored book to their credit; 36 (including some who also authored books on their own) have produced joint books, and 22 have published an edited volume. This figure does not reflect the actual volume and quality of books contributed by the individual members of above four teaching departments and two research centres. Treating the individual contribution separately is beyond the scope of this study, but how far personal academic assets are translated into institutional strength needs to be examined.

For the faculty members of the central departments of Kirtipur Campus, teaching is their obligatory job and research is not binding. In addition to teaching, however, they are institutionally involved in two types of research, serving as guide to dissertation writing by MA students and assisting with the publication of their departmental journal. The History and Political Science departments have suffered from a common problem, viz. the lack of institutional support from outside the university. Both departments sometimes conduct talk programs, workshops and seminars whenever they receive grants from outside. But they get such kind of support very rarely. In its four-decade long life, History Department received a small external grant only three times from the UGC, Nepal-India B.P. Foundation, and Fridrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). So this department has to its credit the production of three sponsored books: *Controversial Themes on Nepali History* (in Nepali) *State of Nepali Historiography*, and *Political Instability in Nepal*. Besides, the History Department has published a bi-annual journal (*Voice of History*) since 1975 but this has only appeared regularly since 1999. The Political Science Department is the most backward faculty in terms of research output. It has not produced a single book nor has it revived the departmental journal since it stopped in 1983.

Economics and Sociology/Anthropology are most prosperous but relatively less productive departments. Thesis writing by MA students is optional in Economics but compulsory in Sociology/Anthropology.

International agencies like Winrock International and GTZ have provided a small grant for the MA dissertation writing program in Sociology/Anthropology and Economics. Besides, the former is receiving similar support from Bergen and Cornell universities. For Economics Department, Nepal Rastra Bank has long provided research fellowships for both students and teachers. It has also borne the financial cost of the departmental journal, *Economics Journal of Nepal*, which is regular since its inception in 1978. The Sociology/ Anthropology Department has its own volumes of occasional paper, which, in fact, employs journal format and standard, but it has produced only 7 volumes in the 14 years from 1987 to 2001. One additional departmental/institutional contribution has been the publication of an edited volume, *Development Practices in Nepal*.

Research at the institutional level by central departments of Kirtipur Campus is negligible. But individual efforts by TU social scientists to get themselves involved in research works through the cultivation of other platforms are an open secret. Some historians of Kirtipur Campus have already published the fruit of their research from CNAS, Royal Nepal Academy, *Itihas Samsodhan Mandal* and other research centres. Relatively speaking, political science has limited scope for research either inside or outside the university, except for the alternative platforms provided by the Political Science Association of Nepal (POLSAN) and Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (NCCS). For sociologists/anthropologists, the space for academic research outside the university is virtually nil though they have been highly patronized by NGOs and INGOs. Thus, the TU sociologists/anthropologists are behind other social scientists in terms of production of books. Only 4 out of 21 faculty members of Sociology/ Anthropology Department of Kirtipur Campus have sole-authored books to their credit, despite this department having 9 Ph. Ds., 6 from the USA and 3 from India. The picture in the Economics Department is not much different from that for sociology/anthropology. Out of 41 faculty members of Economics Department 22 have Ph. D. degrees but the number of single-authored books is just 7 suggesting that the TU economists have least interest in academic research. Most TU economists are busy in projects sponsored by government, NGOs and INGOs.

Research by TU academics from outside Kathmandu is virtually non-existent though the expansion of post-graduate (MA) class in other campuses appear as a push factor in some cases. In addition to Kirtipur campus, the number of other campuses providing MA courses in economic is 8, with the

figures for political science, history and sociology/anthropology 7, 3 and 2 respectively. Prithwi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, first introduced an MA class in economics and geography in 1978 and it later expanded to other subjects, history, political science and English in 1994. The expansion of MA classes in different subjects followed with the establishment of a research committee, which sponsors mini-research projects, with a financial grant of Rs 10,000, to 10-15 campus teachers in each year. The results of these research projects are published in *Prithwi*, a journal of Prithwi Narayan Campus. Besides, the Department of History and Culture, and Political Science and Sociology each have their own journal, *Historiya* and *Journal of Political Science* respectively. Though research in Prithwi Narayan Campus at present is confined to thesis writing by MA students, mini-research by campus teachers and publication of journals, one should appreciate it since such activities have not yet been taken up by other campuses running post-graduate classes.

The role of TU's own research centres needs to be observed to understand the state of social science research in the university. Out of TU's four non-teaching research centres, CNAS and CEDA are assigned to social sciences areas. CNAS focuses on academic research and CEDA on applied research. Their difference is well reflected in their own publication. CNAS's publications are mostly in book form (140) rather than mimeographed (33), whilst CEDA has published relatively few books (12) but the entries for CEDA's own research reports in its library reach to 1689 volumes. CEDA's priority is further reflected by the fact that out of its 34 researchers only 7 have published books of any sought (single-, joint-authored or edited). To contribute to academic research, CEDA has published a journal, *The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies*, since 1975 though it has not come out regularly. Both CNAS and CEDA are multidisciplinary if one looks at the disciplinary background of academics at these two centres.¹⁶ But in terms of research areas, CNAS is genuinely multidisciplinary whereas CEDA is an interdisciplinary centre focusing on only one area, development. Irrespective of the diverse disciplinary backgrounds of CEDA researchers, they are classified into 7 groups in accordance with its priority areas: Planning and Economic Policy, Rural Development, Population and Human Resources, Management System and Administration, Action Research Program, Environment and Resource Management, and Women in Development.

CEDA, since its foundation in 1969 as an autonomous research institution, which was integrated into the university in 1972, has focused on two areas: applied research and training. The purpose of its creation is to provide facilities and conduct applied research activities and to meet the in-service training and career development needs of both government and private organizations (Rana 1978: 6). Till the '70s CEDA was known as the most active think-tank research center but now it has declined due to many reasons. Three of them are noteworthy. First, most of its founder researchers were co-opted to the National Planning Commission and INGOs and did not come back to their parent organization after completing these temporary assignments. Second the foundation of NASC for training to government employees led to the cutting down of CEDA's training activities. Third, CEDA has long suffered from mismanagement, as is witnessed by the irregularity in publication of its journal, lack of record of periodicals in its library, and above all the tendency of individual researchers to seize opportunities for consultancy work ignoring the institutional interest of their own organization.

Social sciences research in the university is becoming neglected and marginalized. To search the reasons behind decline of research in this area, let us recall the tribute paid by Stiller, scholar of Nepali history, to the pioneer scholars of Nepali social sciences, "It has been a selfless task, unrewarding, and possible only because of the high degree of dedication these men have shown" (Stiller 1974: 75-108.) At present, this spirit could hardly be found among the TU social scientists. Particularly after the restoration of democracy in 1990, a new type of social sciences culture has emerged: that is talking culture not working culture, and no research without extra money. The quest for money has led the TU social scientists to work more in other places, mainly on private campuses, NGOs and INGOs, even at the cost of their individual responsibility/assignment in the university. Many university teachers have their own private campuses or NGOs. The high marketability of active TU teachers/researchers in the upcoming fields of commercialized education and consultancy research business has seriously hampered the academic environment of the university. One more problem, which has been constantly raised since TU initiated research, is the separation of research and teaching jobs and the existence of a degree of hostility between those working in research centres and others in teaching departments. So teaching and research have never been seen as complementary to each other.

Government: Research in Nepal at the government level is a new phenomenon starting from the mid-'60s. The space and scope for government research was intensified and diversified in the '70s and the '80s through the setting up of a number of area-specific state-owned research offices. During the panchayat regime, government research meant two things: construction of the ideological and philosophical base for the then partyless panchayat system, and the provision of policy input for development. The relevance of first objective ended with the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 but the importance of the second remained undeniable. The Administrative Reform Commission formed in 1992 recommended setting up a separate policy-planning division in each major ministry and department. The government followed this recommendation in form but not in substance, because the policy-planning division in government offices has become a home for those officials who have failed to obtain patronage from the concerned Secretary or Minister. For government officials, to get an assignment to research work means to receive punishment. The government's insensitivity to and ignorance of the value of research is further observed in the collapse of APROSC, an active and productive research centre. Several other government research offices are heading towards the fate of APROSC. There are still, however, some government agencies outside the ministries and departments which are involved in the production of social sciences knowledge.

The government research institutions can be broadly categorized into four groups: data producers, area-specialized centres, training centres and general. The NPC, a state run think-tank, is the biggest, producing thousands of reports that are classified into five areas: social service and manpower, economic sector and foreign aid, physical infrastructure and water resource development, agriculture and forestry, and rural development and poverty alleviation. The NPC conducts hardly any research work itself. It appears to function merely as a broker, receiving large amounts of money for research from donors and using individuals, private consultancy offices or NGOs enjoying patronage by members of the NPC to carry out foreign-funded research. It is generally perceived that most of the NPC members have their own declared or undeclared consultancy offices.

Most government research institutions, such as NRB, CBS etc., are essentially data collecting units. For instance, CBS publishes vast amounts of data e.g. the population census, agricultural census, industrial census, national accounts, price index etc. The primary activities of area-specific

research offices i.e. TPC, WECS etc. are to generate and produce data on their own specific areas. The government data have largely been used for government's policy planning and by researchers especially by demographers, economists, sociologists. Institute of foreign Affairs (IFA) is also supposedly an area specific centre and was envisaged as a think tank on foreign affairs matter at the time of its foundation but it hardly fulfills the function for which it was established. The running of this office by just two professionals, including the executive director, and its publication of just three books (including two volumes in its policy study series) is enough to indicate the true reality.

The Local Development Training Centre (LDTC) and the NASC are two major training institutions of the government. Both are involved in research but as a supplement to their main task – the provision of training by the LDTC to those involved in local development and by the NASC to government employees. The LDTC's 83 publications over the period 1991-2000 indicate its research priority areas – local development, local self-governance, local elected bodies, and decentralization. The NASC has its own Research Policy and Information Service Department through which the office undertakes in-house research project: 2 full-scale research programmes, 2 mini-research projects and 3 case studies per year (NASC 2000). Over time both the LDTC and the NASC have diversified their clientele through providing training services to NGOs and the private sector as well. They have also intensified their activities mostly in the consultancy sector e.g. the NASC undertook 26 consultancy projects in 1999/2000. Besides, the NASC library has over 10,000 books, reports, and working papers.

Among the government research institutions, RNA and DOA are somehow different from others in terms of areas of their activities. The main objective of RNA is to promote art, language and literature. Nevertheless, research on social sciences also falls under its scope as shown by its publication of 34 books on this area out of its total 565 publications up to 2000. Though the members of RNA are assumed to be outstanding personalities, it has not yet created its own academic staff. It promotes research through providing a grant of Nrs 50,000-75,000 (per person) for 9 scholars per year. The DOA has concentrated on collecting inscriptions and historically important hand-written documents from all over the country.

Some other points need to be highlighted to understand the position of government research. The government allocates funds to its research

institutions merely to meet the salary and administrative costs. So the government research offices are financially dependent on foreign donors. Most government research is limited to data generation and report writing, which are supposed to be used for policy planning and as primary data by social scientists. The government research centres' work is not related to social sciences studies except for some significant articles related to this area published in their own journals.

Private Research Centres, Professional Organizations and NGOs:

Research in Nepal by non-government and non-university sector has developed recently with the mushrooming of NGOs and availability of foreign research funds. The trend is illustrated by the figures for NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Council: there were just 219 of these before the changes of 1990, but by the end of March 2000 they numbered 10,475. If NGOs registered in District Offices in all 75 districts are added to the list the total number exceeds 30,000 (Dahal 2000). Most of them are development NGOs but only a few are active and they generally include research as one of the components of projects they handle. Most among those known as active NGOs have no interest in research nor do they conduct serious studies even though the total project budgets include allocations for research. So their contribution is mainly limited to increasing the quantity of research volumes and diversification of study areas.

In fact research from private sector started only in the '70s except for the *Itihas Sansodhan Mandal* (established in 1952), which in the period following its inception conducted a considerable amount of original research on Nepali history but which later became less active. The post-1990 period witnessed the establishment of several private research centres in the form of NGOs.

The private research institutions, excluding development-focused NGOs and other that do not publish regularly, can roughly be divided into five broad categories: consultancy and action-research-based institutions, advocacy-based NGOs, academic research centres, professional organizations, and INGOs.

New Era (NE), Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) and South Asia Partnership/ Nepal (SAP-N) are important members of the first category. NE and IIDS are pioneer private institutions – both established in the '70s and run throughout by former members of NPC and retired senior bureaucrats – which initiated consultancy and client-based research. They

have later expanded to applied and action research. SAP-N has a different history of turning itself from donor agency (established in 1985) to officially non-governmental development organization in 1994. All these institutions have in common the fact that they have been nurtured by active support from a number of foreign donor agencies. For instance, at present SAP-N has 6 Canadian-aided projects and several other projects funded by INGOs. The three are the richest private centres, NE and SAP-N having their own office complex and IIDS an endowment fund totalling US\$ 990,000. Keeping intact the consultancy business, SAP-N and IIDS have recently entered into the sphere of academic research as well, partly because of the availability of funds in this area and partly because of the competitive market in the research business. Most of their publications in book forms have appeared since the mid-'90s. But the authors of most of these books produced by SAP-N, and IIDS are outsiders, especially university teachers, suggesting the limitation of consultancy-based research institutions in the area of academic research.

The advocacy based NGOs are prospering in a similar way to consultancy-based institutions. Informal Service Sector (INSEC), a human rights organization, could be one of several examples. It has its own paid representatives in all 75 districts of the country. Its involvement in research is well reflected by its own publication of 95 items, including its periodicals, till 2000. The value of research it has conducted is, however, primarily confined to a supplementary role in support of its advocacy of human rights and campaigns against *kamaiya* (bonded labor system), child labor, exploitation of women, and the practice of untouchability.

Among the private academic research centers, Centre for Social Research and Development (CSR-D) is unique as it was set up by independent persons of different disciplines who dislike building their career through university and other formal institutions. The conduct of regular weekly discussion on a variety of subjects through its sister organization, Martin Chautari, has encouraged a new culture among the small number of educated youngsters who take part in debate and discourse on contemporary issues.

Aside from CSR-D, the private academic centres are mostly run by TU's incumbent teachers, for example, Nepal Foundation for Advance Studies (NEFAS) and NCCS. Most of these organizations produce mostly compilations of seminar papers. For instance, NEFAS has published more books (27 up to September 2001) than any other private research centre, but 16 are seminar proceedings, 5 monographs, 4 jointly authored works, and only 2 books by single authors. Of South Asia Study Centre (SASC)'s total

five books three are seminar proceedings. Only two, CSRD and NCCS, are producing their own bi-annual journal in addition to the latter's quarterly occasional papers. Their record of book production is limited to one volume each. However, since the late '90s, NCCS has developed ambitious programs including workshops/seminars, data generation, fieldwork-based research, publication of journal and occasional papers, and the training of youngsters in political science and other social sciences. Recently NCCS has further increased both its research and training activities with financial help from the Ford Foundation. SASC was founded by a former bureaucrat-cum-politician but for research activities it is also entirely dependent on university teachers. Out of its five hired researchers undertaking a study project on elections, four are incumbent TU academics.

The domination of university teachers can also be found in professional organizations i.e. POLSAN, History Association of Nepal (HAN), Nepal Economic Association (NEA) and Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON). These organizations draw membership from the post-graduates of the relevant discipline irrespective of their type of employment, but university teachers control both their administration and their academic activities. POLSAN once appeared as the most active organization with its record of producing nine books and one journal. But its split into three groups led to a reduction in its vibrancy and the presidents of all three splinter POLSANs have used them as their own pocket organizations to promoting their own vested interests. At present all the three POLSANs confine their activities to organizing occasional talk programs and seminars. Other professional organizations like HAN, NEA and SASON are united but unable to expedite their activities beyond holding workshops and talk programs, except for SASON's publication of two sets of seminar proceedings in book form. The professional organizations of Nepal, like the private academic research centers, are financially in poor condition. If they receive endowment funds, the above mentioned professional organizations could be a viable alternative platform for promoting social sciences research in Nepal.

Since a congenial environment for social sciences research appeared after the restoration of democracy in 1990, some research as well as advocacy-based INGOs – i.e. National Democratic Institution for International Affairs (NDI), ORG-MARG, Coalition for Actions for South Asian Cooperation (CASAC), South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) – have also set up their offices in Kathmandu. Some of them are directly involving themselves in research, and others are providing training and other facilities to the new

social scientists of Nepal. NDI has conducted some research and hold workshops on contemporary issues, especially on gender, corruption, parliament, political parties and governance. SAFHR and CASAC have also run several research and training projects on peace, conflict resolution and regional cooperation. The Sri Lanka-based Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) have provided opportunities to both the established and emerging social scientists to get academic exposure at South Asian level. ORG-MARG, a profit making India-based organization, set up its branch office in Kathmandu in 1993 and in the seven years up to 2000, it conducted 11 opinion surveys on different issues.

The involvement of private institutions in research has had the following positive results: 1) opening new space for research outside the government and university structure; 2) expanding the nature of research from purely academic to action and applied research; 3) developing field based quantitative and empirical studies; and diversifying the areas of research to include gender, environment, dalits, tribal communities, human rights and a number of other issues ignored by the government and university. However the private research centres and NGOs are doing research on the periphery not the core of social science subjects since donors are not much interested to academic research nor can the resulting publications, in most cases, be considered truly scholarly works. Two other things need to be noticed. One, private research institution cannot survive without continuous support from one or more foreign donors. Two, they often do client-based research and the research output is limited to report writing for clients. So most of the data they generate are confined to themselves and to the donors. For instance out of 110 plus 39 studies/reports/projects conducted by IIDS up to 2001, only 32 have been published in book form. Similarly very few out of 340 reports prepared by New Era up to 2000 have been published.

Case Studies

This section concentrates on a comparative study of two social sciences research centres: CNAS, a university body, and IIDS, a private-sector institution. Originating as the Institute of Nepal Studies (INS) in 1969 and changing its name to Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies (INAS) in 1972 and finally to its present title in 1977, the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) was established to conduct social sciences research in the university. In its initial phase under the leadership of founder Dean Prayag Raj Sharma,

who had trained in ancient history and archeology, it focused on study and research related to history, sociology, anthropology and language. This office had institutional status, headed by a Dean, and it could award MA and Ph.D. degree through dissertation. The degree granting authority was taken away permanently when it was downgraded from research institution to research centre in 1977 and Dor Bahadur Bista, a leading anthropologist, succeeded Prayag Raj Sharma as Executive Director of the centre. This change, however, had no major effect on its research areas or on CNAS's emergence as the major institution of social sciences research in Nepal. Rather, the centre acquired new infrastructure and resources, including a large office complex, and the recruitment of new researchers.

CNAS took a new turn in the '80s with the appointment of Kumar Khadga Bikram Shah, the brother in law of King Birendra, to the post of Executive Director in 1984. He strengthened the political science wing to materialize his vision of making CNAS as a think tank on foreign affairs. Previously CNAS had only one political scientist but later the number increased to 11, specializing respectively on Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Japan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, regional affairs and international relations. CNAS's political science wing grew in importance with the publication of the journal, *Strategic Study Series*, *CNAS Year Review* in addition to their contribution to *CNAS Forum*. To facilitate research, CNAS subscribed to a number of international journals and leading newspapers from all South Asian countries. But this wing suffered suddenly in early 1989 because of the regimented educational and research system under the partyless panchayat regime. The difference between Khadga Bikram Shah and a senior political scientist, Lok Raj Baral, on India-Nepal relations and particularly on India's blockade of Nepal in March 1989, led to the cruel decision to transfer many political scientists from CNAS to other campuses. The publication of *Strategic Study Series*, *CNAS Year Review* and *CNAS Forum* stopped permanently. This event led eventually to a swing in the focus of the CNAS political science wing from foreign policy to domestic politics, though the switch occurred partly because of the change in focus of research after the restoration of democracy in 1990.

Departures from CNAS continued after 1990 but those leaving were now mainly sociologists/anthropologists. It should be noted here that next to political science, sociology/anthropology was the most powerful wing of CNAS during Khadga Bikram Shaha's tenure (1984-1990). CNAS' sociologists/anthropologists along with some academics from other

disciplines, viz. history, economics, geography and management, conducted two big research projects, one on Mustang and another on Remote Area Development. Three senior researchers of sociology/anthropology returned to teaching department in 1990-1991, and were afterwards replaced by recruiting 3 new sociologists/anthropologists. At present, CNAS has 5 political scientists, 5 sociologists/anthropologists, 3 linguists and 7 from history, culture and archeology.

CNAS has had many ups and downs but two things remain unaffected: the regular publication of its journal, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, over the last 28 years and the quality of its research output. The availability of a separate publication fund from the government since 1995 has helped to increase the volume of book publications. CNAS also sometimes receives research funds from the government and international agencies. The total amount of such grants since 1990 is 34,97,434 rupees for four different projects. The centre is also benefiting, particularly with regard to further training of its academic staff, from its institutional affiliation with research centres outside the country, currently with the International Institute for Asian Studies (Netherlands), Centre National De la Recherche Scientifique (France), Nityanda Institute (USA), and International Development and Economic Cooperation (Japan). Looking at the other side of the picture, however one can find problems faced by CNAS. These include lack of institutional approach in setting research agendas, insufficient funds for research, ever increasing bureaucratization, inadequate use of library resources, involvement of some of its academics in consultancy research outside the university etc.

IIDS, since its foundation as Integrated Development System (IDS) in 1979, has made constant efforts both to strengthen itself as an institution and to expand its research activities. The founders are Kul Shekhar Sharma, Bhekh Bahadur Thapa (former senior bureaucrats) and Prakash Chandra Lohani (an academic turned politician). The organization gained the new name IIDS in 1990. The experience and connections built up with foreign donors by the founder director and his successors during their jobs in the Finance Ministry or in Planning Commission counted a lot in building IIDS's capacity to mobilize external sources of funds. At present, there is a long list of foreign donors providing financial grants to this office.¹⁷

In the beginning IIDS, or IDS as it then was, concentrated on consultancy research provided by international agencies i.e. IDRC, ESCAPE etc. Applied and action research particularly on development issues are its specialty. The

holding of the chief executive post by two women- Meena Acharya and Indira Shrestha- for around six years in the '80s contributed to adding one new area of research - gender. Over time, IIDS has also entered the field of academic research but economics and development remain its thrust, as suggested by the volume and number of its research. It has to its credit over 100 reports on different aspects of development.¹⁸

IIDS has declared its ambition to develop itself as a think-tank (IIDS 1996-97). To meet this goal, money is no problem for IIDS but its strength in terms of manpower is questionable. In contrast to its claim of having 35 professional staff divided into general research and action research groups (IIDS 1999-2000: 30), the office has actually just 10 academic staff with post-graduate qualifications but lists most of its administrative staff as professionals doing action research. Among the general researchers, two have Ph. D. degrees and a record of academic publication, but for the rest academic research is an unknown area. Most academic work as well as applied research carried out by IIDS have been done by outsiders with in-house academics acting as assistants to the hired main researchers. This exposes the limitation of client-based research institutions: there is a big gap between dream and reality.

CNAS and IIDS, each has own distinct place. CNAS is primarily a multidisciplinary centre. For IIDS, the dominant subject is economic development. CNAS is primarily an academic centre whereas IIDS's expertise is in applied and action research. So, the research output of IIDS is more directly relevant to policy formulation while CNAS is more orientated to pure social sciences research. There are also important differences between the two institutions in the background and qualifications of their staff. CNAS, is far ahead of IIDS, in terms of caste/ethnic composition, disciplinary background, and academic credentials of individual researchers employed. Most notably, 9 CNAS academics have a Ph.D. degree against IIDS's 2, whilst 13 researchers of the former institution have produced their own book but IIDS's professionals authored only unpublished research reports. Individuals' assets are naturally reflected in institutional strength. CNAS has 140 books to its credit against IIDS's 32. The number of unpublished reports produced by IIDS is 58 against CNAS's 95. CNAS library has acquired 9391 books and subscribes to 59 journals. IIDS's library has a collection of 1457 books, 2430 research reports and 30 periodicals (including newspapers, magazine and newsletters). Looked at in perspective, differences between CNAS and IIDS are natural since CNAS is 10 years older than IIDS and its

total manpower is double that of IIDS. Most CNAS academics have a long professional record but most of the IIDS's present professionals took up their positions only after 1990. In contrast to TU's system of offering permanent positions to both administrative and academic staff, IIDS recruits its staff on two-year renewable contracts. On money matter CNAS cannot match IIDS. The research budget allocated to CNAS for this year (2000-2001) is only Nrs. 900,000 compared to Nrs. 36,00,000 for IIDS.

Research Accessories: Materials and Funds

Scholarly work on social science is a sophisticated job which demands – in addition to personal devotion and a conducive institutional environment – minimal research materials and optimum financial support.

Books and Journals: About books on Nepal published in the country between 1990 and 1996, TU Central Library's catalogue has 52 entries related to history, 201 on political science, 267 on economics and 99 on sociology/anthropology. Most of them, however, are works of propaganda or advocacy, party documents, or NGO productions, and only a few could be considered as academic books. A survey at Mandala Book Point, a bookshop which stocks most academic books on Nepal written in English, shows a total of 868 titles: 79 on history, 94 on politics, 95 on economy, and 78 on sociology and anthropology related topics. Leaving aside the contributions of foreign scholars and publishers, book publication in Nepal particularly in the social science areas is thriving since the institutions and publishers are taking an interest in this business.

Two government-funded institutions, Sajha Prakashan and Royal Nepal Academy, are the biggest book producers in Nepal but their contribution in the field of social science is relatively small. Private research centres are of increasing importance in this field but their failure to publish on history and their concentration on the Nepali economy shows their focus. The most welcome trend is the interest taken by private professional publishers in producing academic books.¹⁹ Previously they were concentrating only on textbooks and travel books. Over the last few years they have paid growing attention to the publication of scholarly books on social science areas.

Journals are another avenue for academic publishing. Most remarkably, NGOs and private centres for applied/action research have made no contribution in this field. Except for the production of house-journals by

some government-run offices, this area is the exclusive domain of the university and private academic research centres. The table below gives a list of journals on social science areas of Nepal, including two published outside Nepal.

Table 4: Social Science Journals

Social Science general	History	Political Science	Economics	Sociology/ Anthropology
1. <i>Contributions to Nepalese Studies</i> (B) 2. <i>Kailash</i> 3. <i>Studies in Nepali History and Society</i> (B) 4. <i>Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies</i> 5. <i>Journal of Nepal Research Centre</i> 6. <i>Pragya</i> (N) 7. <i>Journal of Nepalese Studies</i> 8. <i>Journal of Nepalese Studies</i> * 9. <i>European Bulletin of Himalayan Research</i> *	1. <i>Rolamba</i> (B) 2. <i>Ancient Nepal</i> 3. <i>Abhilekh</i> (N) 4. <i>Voice of History</i> 5. <i>Purnima</i> (N) 6. <i>Historiya</i>	1. <i>Journal of political Science</i> 2. <i>Nepali Political Science and Politics</i>	1. <i>Economic Journal of Nepal</i> 2. <i>Vikas</i> 3. <i>Economic Review</i> 4. <i>Nepal Population and Development Journal</i> 5. <i>The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies</i>	1. <i>Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology</i> 2. <i>Janajati</i> (N)

(B) = bi-lingual, N= Nepali, * From outside Nepal.

Libraries: The history of libraries in Nepal goes back to the end of 19th century with the opening of the Bir Library, the first public library, later renamed the National Archives. The personal collection of Kaiser Shamsheer Rana was also turned into the government-owned Kaiser Library in 1964, which now has a collection of 50,000 books and other materials. Similarly the Nepal National Library came into existence in 1956 when Hem Raj Pandey donated his personal collection to the government. This library was enlarged through its merger with the Central Secretariat Library. It has 70,000 books, documents and periodicals. However, the largest library at present is TU Central Library, which has over 220,000 books and 500 periodicals including newspapers. In the specific field of social sciences, CNAS and CEDA have fairly good collections of books and journals.

There are four different types of library in Nepal. Each library has own specific feature in terms of use. Among the government libraries, National Library, Kaiser Library and National Archive are not discipline specific but most of the users, aside from the newspaper readers, are those searching for old books. Historians, however, are of the opinion that some foreign libraries e.g. Indian National Archive (Delhi), National Library (Calcutta) and Commonwealth Office Library (London) have better collections about Nepali history than are found in Nepal itself. While visiting the government owned libraries the author found very few readers in library. Many readers expressed disappointment with the standard of management. The staffs of these libraries have complained about another problem: lack of funds. The Kaiser Library receives only Nrs. 50,000 per year and around half of that budget is spent on newspapers alone. The National Archives was able to acquire only 134 books in the last year.

The library of the RNA has good collections but mostly on the subject of fine art, culture and literature similar to the Madan Puraskar Library. The later one is unique because of its collection of old newspapers and periodicals published from Nepal. The libraries of the NPC, NRB and NASC provide service to their own staff. The libraries of IIDS and NE are also confined to internal use only. Most library users visit Indian, British and American libraries for journals than books. For TU students and teachers, TU Central Library has provided service since its establishment in 1959. In addition to its rich collection of over 220,000 books, it receives 251 journals published from outside the country, in addition to 281 journals and magazines and 87 newspapers published from Nepal. This library is mostly used by post-graduate students for text/reference books and for thesis writing. But TU

social sciences teachers/ researchers have an extremely poor record of using this library. According to the official record of academic staff entering the library in the month of September 2001, the number of visits by members of different departments were: 4 from CNAS, 1 from CEDA, 3 from political science, 7 from sociology/anthropology and 13 from economics.

The state of almost zero use of the central university library by Nepali social scientists reveals a number of problems. Firstly, serious social sciences study/research in the university is declining. Secondly, as university teachers often complain, there is a lack of new books and standard journals and also a problem of mismanagement in the library. Thirdly, there is a growing tendency for active social scientists to rely on building a personal library. Fourthly, most research in Nepal has been done outside the university and many private research centres and NGOs have their own small library. For instance, IIDS has its own library with a collection of 1457 books, 2430 reports and 30 periodicals including newspapers. Since most of their work involves applied and action research, which demands more data-based study than rigorous deskwork, the culture of library use is eroding. Fifth, the use of the Internet is also partly responsible as it opens up a new source of knowledge. Especially those who have recently been trained in the Western universities have a habit of using the Internet everyday. Others too are starting to follow this trend.

Research Funds: One of the major reasons behind the decline of social sciences research in TU is lack of funds. TU has increasingly reduced its research responsibility as shown by the decrease of its research budget over time- 22.6 percent of total expenditure in 1983/84, 12.5 percent in 1988/89 and 9.3 percent in 1992/93 (Dahal 1999: 25). Money allocated to four research centres of TU is very nominal, only 1.3 percent of TU's total budget (Dahal 2000: 22). Worst of all, these research centres have long allocated more (approximately 85 percent) for salaries and much less to research work (less than 15 percent). The Dean's office of the Humanities and Social Sciences has an annual budget of only Nrs. 500,000 to support its mini-research program. The teaching faculties do not have any research budget except for small grants provided by national and international institutions to MA students of economics and sociology/anthropology departments for their dissertation writing. Very few TU social scientists and Ph. D. students have received the small grants provided by the UGC.

Both private and government research are completely dependent on foreign grants. The Ford Foundation, USAID, DANIDA, Asian Foundation, IDRC (Canada), and SNV (Netherlands) are the major donors for both academic and applied research. Others who contribute more to advocacy and development research are UNDP, World Bank, ADB, HELVETAS, GTZ etc. So the research budget of some established private institution would naturally be much higher than that of the university. The table below shows the difference between one TU research centre and one private research institute in allocation of research budget.

Table 5: Research Budget of CNAS and IIDS

	CNAS		IIDS	
	Research	Publication	Research	Publication
1990/91	700,000	-	360,000,0	400,000
1991/92	700,000	-	360,000,0	400,000
1992/93	700,000	-	396,000,0	440,000
1993/94	700,000	-	486,000,0	540,000
1994/95	700,000	-	612,000,0	680,000
1995/96	700,000	700,000	558,000,0	620,000
1996/97	700,000	700,000	864,000,0	960,000
1997/98	900,000	700,000	675,000,0	750,000
1998/99	700,000	700,000	432,000,0	480,000
1999/2000	900,000	700,000	729,000,0	810,000
2000/2001	900,000	700,000	360,000,0	400,000

Source: CNAS' planning section and IIDS's administrative section.

The UGC represents a recent attempt to foster the academic environment in the country. This institution was established in 1994 to channelize the government's financial grants for university and higher education. The UGC has a research budget that increased from Nrs. 6.5 million in 1996/97 to 9.9 million in 1999/2000, to support the university teachers in their different kinds of academic activities i.e training, seminars, field work, library work etc.

UNIVERSITY		RESEARCH BUDGET		RESEARCH BUDGET	
1996/97		1997/98		1998/99	
Nrs.		Nrs.		Nrs.	
6.5		7.5		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
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1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
9.9		9.9		9.9	
1999/2000					

Table 6: UGC's Research Budget Allocation

	Subjects	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
1	Training	150,000,0	204,750	800,000	110,000,0
2	Research Promotion	700,000	100,000,0	100,000,0	100,000,0
3	Visiting Program	300,000	--	800,000	600,000
4	Fellowship	400,000	100,000,0	130,000,0	170,000,0
5	Support to M.Phil/Ph. D	-	800,000	100,000,0	500,000
6	Physical Facility	600,000	120,000,0	200,000,0	210,000,0
7	Library Strengthening	100,000,0	559, 000	130,000,0	120,000,0
8	Seminar/workshop	300,000	265,500	500,000	500,000
9	Teaching Material Development	300,000	60,000	300,000	300,000
10	UGC' own activities	700,000	530,000	500,000	537,000
11	Miscellaneous	700,000	--	400,000	400,000
	Total	650,000,0	561,875,0	990,000,0	993,700,0

Source: UGC, Annual Report 1995/96; 96/97; 97/98; 1998/1999; 1999/2000.

UGC is not discipline specific nor is its scope limited to a particular university. Teachers at all Nepali universities, public campuses and private colleges, are entitled to seek financial support for their academic work from this office. Social scientists are among them and the record shows that they have secured 25 percent of UGC's total spending for its program of mini-research projects, research visits, travel grants for oversea seminars, Ph.D fellowships, and seminars.

Table 7: UGC Grants for Research and Related Activities

	Subjects	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
	Total				
	Mini Research Projects	37	39	41	40
	Research visits	4	-	2	6
	Travel grants for seminars	5	23	29	47
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	20	23	24
	Seminar Organization	12	15	17	24
1	Political Science				
	Mini Research Projects	1	2	1	4
	Research visits	-	--	-	-
	Travel grants for seminars	-	-	1	-
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	-	1	2
	Seminar Organization	-	-	-	-
2	Economics				
	Mini Research Projects	3	4	3	3
	Research visits	-	-	-	-
	Travel grant for seminars	1	3	1	-
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	3	1	3
	Seminar Organization	-	1	-	2
3	History				
	Mini Research Projects	3	4	4	1
	Research visits	1	-	-	2
	Travel grants for seminars	-	-	-	2
	Fellowship (Ph.D)	-	1	4	2
	Seminar Organization	1	1	1	1
4	Sociology/Anthropology				
	Minis Research Projects	2	-	1	1
	Research visits	-	-	-	-
	Travel grants for seminars	1	-	-	1
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	1	-	1
	Seminar Organization	-	-	1	-

Source: UGC, Annual Report 1996/97; 97/98; 1998/1999; 1999/2000.

UGC provides a grant of up to Nrs 20,000 per person under its mini-research project scheme and the numbers of university teachers who benefited from this program in each year were 37-40. The record shows the UGC's support of Rs 9000-20,000 per person for field studies in South Asian countries. The number of university teachers who received travel grant for their participation in overseas conferences increased from 23 in 1996/97 to 47 in 1999/2000. The amount granted under this title varied from Nrs. 5,000 to 25,000. In each year UGC provides Ph. D. fellowships, from a minimum of Nrs. 2000 to a maximum of 5,600 per month, to 20-24 university teachers for their advance study. It also provides amount of Nrs 7,000 to 25,000 to different teaching departments for conducting seminars. The budget allocation under different headings and the number of persons benefiting over the last four years shows that the UGC has many schemes but the individual grants it provides are very nominal.

Conclusion

When social sciences research in Nepal began in the '50s it was dominated by foreign scholars but at present the interest of overseas researchers has declined considerably. Except for the CNRS (Paris) working at institutional level, foreign research on social sciences areas of Nepal is largely confined to individual interest and effort. By the mid-'60s, native researchers were engaged in producing social sciences knowledge but within a limited area. They have not yet embarked on theory and concept building. Their horizons are largely national in scope, i.e. Nepali history, Nepali politics, Nepali economy and Nepali society, and not beyond to diplomatic history, foreign relations, and trade with neighboring countries. The few political scientists who have been acknowledged as experts of South Asian affairs have recently concentrated on domestic politics.

The future of social sciences research in Nepal is bleak for two main reasons. First, the Nepali state/government is not likely to be interested in study/ research on social science areas. Second, the societal demand is for job-oriented education, as suggested by the exclusion of social science subjects by newly established universities and their affiliated campuses/colleges. There are many other grounds for pessimism. TU, the only university taking responsibility for social sciences study/research is not also losing its interest in research but also in a state of general decline. Taking this into account, it is not unnatural that the active TU

teachers/researchers seek an alternative platform, one that is largely provided by private research institutions and mushrooming NGOs. The research output of non-university sectors is generally poor in quality. Nor can much be expected from the government research institutions except for their contributions in generating raw data.

Despite the downward trend of social sciences research in Nepal, it can be improved if concerted efforts are made to address some major problems i.e. bias education system against social sciences; exclusion of research component in teaching faculties; lack of coordination and cooperation between researchers and faculty members of teaching departments; lack of research fund in TU and in most private academic research centres; over dependence of government, private research centers and NGOs upon foreign donors for meeting financial cost of their own research projects; decrease the motivation even among the serious scholars to carry out academic work; increased tendency of involving in consultancy business by active TU teachers/researchers; and non-publication of most applied, action, and client based research reports.

The revival of TU as an effective academic institution is must for improving social science research in Nepal. Since it still enrolls 80 percent of the total students of higher education and it alone has providing higher education for social science subjects, TU is a gateway to go ahead towards the goal of promoting social science knowledge in Nepal. TU does not have problem of able manpower; its problems are erosion in personal honesty and integrity of its academics, mismanagement in university administration, and lack of adequate fund. Of several ways to mitigate these problems, one is inclusion of research component in teaching departments. The administration should take necessary policy measures so that the teaching faculty can directly deal with financiers of research projects. Donors should also have a sort of commitment to strengthen academic environment in TU. If a conducive environment is built up in this way, TU teachers will be involved more in their own institution. This, in turn, will help for the institution building of private research centers, at least in developing their own research manpower.

Above all, Nepal needs an umbrella organization to sustain and develop social sciences study and research. The establishment of a social sciences research promotion council, like that of Indian Social Science Research Council, should be a priority objective. An endowment fund for such council can be generated from the government and donor agencies, which are

interested in pure academic research in social science areas. Such proposed scheme will not impede to any university or private research centre in their individual link and dealing with donor agencies.

Notes

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- 1 William Kirkpatrick, Francis Hamilton, Hector Oldfield and Perceval Landon have been considered as the pioneer authors of books on Nepali history and or Nepali anthropology. None of them was trained social scientists. They were travelers and British envoys and their purpose of visit to Nepal was either to spread Christianity or to introduce British influence in Nepal.
- 2 Bhagwan Lal Indraji, Hari Prashad Shastri and K. P. Jaisawal are the first Indian historians known to have written on Nepali history.
- 3 Surya Bikram Gyanwali, Naya Raj Panta and Ambika Prasad Upadhaya are pioneer native historians.
- 4 Some notable Western scholars on Nepali history are Giuseppe Tucci, Raniero Gnoli, Luciano Petech, Ludwig Stiller, John Whelpton and Mary Slusser.

- 5 Indian historians who have worked on Nepali history include K.C. Chaudhary, Ramakant, Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, Asad Husain and Satish Kumar.
- 6 The pioneer Nepali historians are Yogi Narahari Nath, Babu Ram Acharya, Naya Raj Panta, Dhana Bajra Bajracharya, Shanakar Man Rajbanshi, Hemraj Sakya, Surya Bikra Gyawali and Dilli Raman Regmi.
- 7 Notable foreign writers on the Nepali economy are Eugene Mihaly, W.O. Thewat, Lovache, Bin Hakker, David Seddon, Sakiyama, J.C. Ojha and S.C. Jain.
- 8 A few members of university's economics department like Y. P. Pant, I. L. Pradhan, B. P. Shrestha, P. P. Timilsina, Sri Ram Poudel, Guna Nidhi Sharma and Madan Dahal have made some noteworthy contributions in both teaching and research on the Nepali economy.
- 9 Scholars who focus on specific areas on the Nepali economy are: Y. B. Panta, Hari Shankar Tripathy and Gunanidhi Sharma on finance, S. R. Poudel, U. B. Pradhanang and Bhuchandra Vaidya on trade, Badri Prasad Shrestha, Mohan Man Sainju, Ram Prakash Yadav and Mahesh Baskota on planning, S. P. Adhikari, S. B. Rai, Devendra Raj Pande on rural development, and Harka Gurung and Surya Lal Amatya (both geographers) on regional planning.
- 10 American scholars on Nepali politics include Leo Rose, Fred Gaige, Margaret Fisher and John Scholz.
- 11 Indian scholars who have done research on Nepali political studies are Anirudha Gupta, H.N. Agrawal, S.D. Muni, Ramakant, R.S. Chauhan, Tribhuvan Nath, S.K.Jha, Parmananda, B. C. Upreti and M. D. Dharamadasani.
- 12 Keshar Bahadur K.C, Grisma Bahadur Devkota and Prachanda Pradhan, members of the first generation of native authors, have focussed on political aspects of the judicial system, general history and administrative history of Nepal respectively.
- 13 Some among several oversea writers on sociology/anthropology of Nepal are Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, Alan Macfarlane, Lionel Caplan, Michael Allen, Gérard Toffin, David Gellner, James Fisher, E. E. Okeda, Charles McDougal, John Hitchcock, Bernard Pignède, Gabriel, Colin Rosser, Julian C.J. Wake, Alexander Macdonald, and Donald Messerschmidt.
- 14 Dor Bahadur Bista is considered as the pioneer of Nepali anthropology. Some of his contemporaries who contributed to research and training in

- this discipline are G.S. Nepali, Swayambhu Lal Shrestha, Bihari Krishna Shrestha and T.S. Thapa.
15. University Grants Commission's Annual Reports 1995/96; 1996/97; 1997/98; 1998/99; and 1999/2000.
 16. CNAS researchers consist of 7 from history, culture and archeology, 5 from political science, 5 from sociology/anthropology and 3 from English language and literature. CEDA has 13 economists, 9 from management, 5 statisticians, 3 political scientists and one each from language, population, sociology and culture.
 17. Ford Foundation, Helyitas (a Swiss INGO), and UNICEF are regular financers to IIDS and others who contributed research grants, at different times, are AFFHC (Australia), CECI and CCO (Canada), GTZ (German), UN University (Japan) CEDPA, UNESCO, SNV (Netherland), UNDP, USAID, World Bank, ADB.
 18. IIDS reports are classified into 11 sections: 11 reports on economic studies and development policies, 5 on finance, 7 on international trade and payments, 8 on sector studies, 2 on development policy, 22 on population, health and family planning, 17 on agricultural and rural development, 7 on environment and resources, 19 on women development, 7 on organization, training and management, 3 others.
 19. Some Nepali publishers contributing for the publications of academic books are: Mandala Book Point, Himal Association, Pilgrims, Ratna Pushtak Bhandar and Yakata Pushtak.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF MICROFINANCE PROGRAMMES: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH IN NEPAL

**Takashi Takahatake
Keshav L. Maharjan**

Introduction

In Nepal, development planning was started with the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan in 1956. Despite experiencing improvements, Nepal still remains one of the poorest countries in the world with a human development ranking of 129 out of 167 countries (UNDP 2001). Since the installation of a multi-party democracy in 1990, the Eighth (1992-1997) and Ninth (1997-2002) Five-Year Plans have shifted policy towards liberalization of the economy and decentralization of power to try and promote development. In particular, poverty alleviation has been the major focus of these two Plans, with a wide range of policies being instituted to try to improve the situation of the poor.

One strategy that the Nepali Government has been following to combat poverty is the use of microfinance as a tool to improve the socio-economic situation of the poor. While the use of microfinance to help combat poverty has become widespread throughout the world, debate still remains as how it can be best used to alleviate poverty in a sustainable manner. On the one hand, it is argued that the creation of a healthy and competitive financial landscape is the best way that microfinance can be used to alleviate poverty, while others argue that the provision of both financial and basic social services can better tackle the problems of poverty. The purpose of this paper is to provide a general understanding of this debate by giving a brief historical account of the development of the microfinance. With the help of flowcharts

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the paper also provides an understanding of how microfinance works to alleviate poverty. Secondly, an overview of the various microfinance programmes in Nepal is provided in order to gain an understanding of the Nepali microfinancial landscape and the problems that it is facing. Lastly, from all of these discussions, a conceptual framework for an alternative model is proposed that might help to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of microfinance programmes, given the severe poverty conditions existing in Nepal today.

Brief Overview of the Development of Credit Programmes

The provision of credit to those living in rural areas of the developing world has been a tool that has widely been used to try and promote development. First-generation credit programmes of the 1960's and 1970's provided low interest loans for agricultural purposes to facilitate the adoption of higher yielding technologies. While the intention of these programmes were to enable the poor to gain access to loans, the system utilized to distribute credit was incompatible with their socio-economic condition.¹ In fact, tempted by interest rates that typically went as low as 2%, the rich used their political power to gain access to this credit that was not intended for them. Also, despite the fact that the rich received these low interest loans, the repayment rates were extremely low. Unable to recover money that was lent out, rural financial institutions (RFI) found it impossible to cover their costs of operations and were considered to be a resounding failure.

The development of the Ohio State University Rural Financial Market theory² in the early 1980s provided a good understanding of why these programmes failed. While space limitations make it impossible to fully outline the theory, the basic criticism it makes about the first-generation credit programmes is that they did not allow for the proper development of the financial markets in rural areas. The subsidization of interest rates only served to distort the credit market leading to the mistargeting of credit to the rich. It is argued that rural financial institutions (RFIs) need to provide good quality banking services³ in rural areas and charge interest rates that reflect the cost of doing business in these areas. In doing so, RFIs will be better able to serve the rural population and overcome the problems experienced in the past.

At around the same time that this theory was being proposed, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh was experiencing success in lending small amounts of money (microcredit) to the poor, without collateral, while experiencing high rates of repayment. Poor people borrowed money from the

Grameen Bank, using a group lending methodology⁴, and invested it into a microenterprise⁵ activity. With the extra income earned from this activity, people were able to pay off their loans and get new ones. Through the repetition of this cycle, studies showed that programme participants were able to slowly improve their socio-economic condition. These successes, along with donor enthusiasm for the potential of microfinance to help alleviate poverty, paved the way for the establishment of second-generation credit policies aimed toward the development of the microeconomy by providing credit for investment into microenterprise. Since that time, many microfinance programmes have sprung up all over the world and various systems of lending have been experimented with to try and deliver these microfinance services in an efficient manner.

Two Categories of Microfinance Programmes

From all the experimentation with different types of lending systems conducted in the past two decades, there are two general types of microfinance programmes that can be discerned. The first are welfarist institutions that provide both financial and social services to the poor. Although the nature and degree of services provided by welfarists differ from one institution to another, they generally provide "services and training related to nutrition, health, literacy, group formation and client training."⁶ The main interest of such institutions is on improving the social well being of participants, "with less interest in banking than in using credit as a means to effect fundamental social and economic changes for borrowers and communities. The result is a continued reliance on subsidies and reluctance to raise interest rates. Welfarists focus on outreach (targeting women and the poor) rather than financial sustainability" (Morduch, 1997).

The second type of microfinance programme is known as institutionalists, which focuses upon the provision of basic financial services of deposit and loans. The main focus of such institutions is that of sustainability and believes that as long as sustainable financial services are provided, the entrepreneurial abilities of individuals is sufficient to bring about development. As Morduch (1997) argues, the focus of such institutions is on:

creating financial institutions to serve clients who are either not served or under-served by the formal financial system...leading to achievement of scale (number of clients) over outreach

(levels of poverty) and relegates client impact to the back burner.

In order to attain this goal, institutionalists need to provide high quality financial services and charge interest rates that reflect the cost of doing business in rural areas. This is a view that is touted by supporters of the Rural Financial Markets theory mentioned earlier.

In order to better understand the difference between these two methods of thought, the next two sections of this paper will describe the flowcharts shown in figures 1 and 2. These charts are an attempt at bringing about a more complete visualization of the socio-economic forces at work and how microfinance programmes impact upon those who participate in them. Since poverty is not only an economic issue but also a social one⁷ (Chambers 1983), the flowcharts try to take this into account with the left-hand sides of these flowcharts showing how programmes combat the economic aspects of poverty and the right-hand sides delineating how the social aspects of poverty are overcome.

Welfarists⁸: By examining the experiences of welfarists programmes around the world, figure 1 is an attempt at providing visual picture of how welfarists try to alleviate poverty. Looking at figure 1, the situation of the rural poor in the developing world can be characterized by a situation of low income⁹ and low social status¹⁰. These two factors combined define the socio-economic condition I¹¹ box. Those entering a welfarist programme go through a screening¹² process. Those who are screened-out are rejected due to economic¹³ and/or social¹⁴ reasons. This means that these people revert back to their original socio-economic condition of low income and low social status.

Those who pass the screening process, however, receive credit that can be used towards productive investment in a microenterprise and also receive training and welfare¹⁵ support. Typically, a small portion of the loan is deposited with the bank to-hedge against default.¹⁶ Also, regular deposits¹⁷ are usually required to instil a savings habit. These deposits, along with the money deducted from the loan, can be considered as forced savings, which can be used as a source of capital to cover any emergencies that may arise. In terms of the microfinance programme, these forced savings play a dual role by affecting both the manpower ability¹⁸ and the investment of a person.

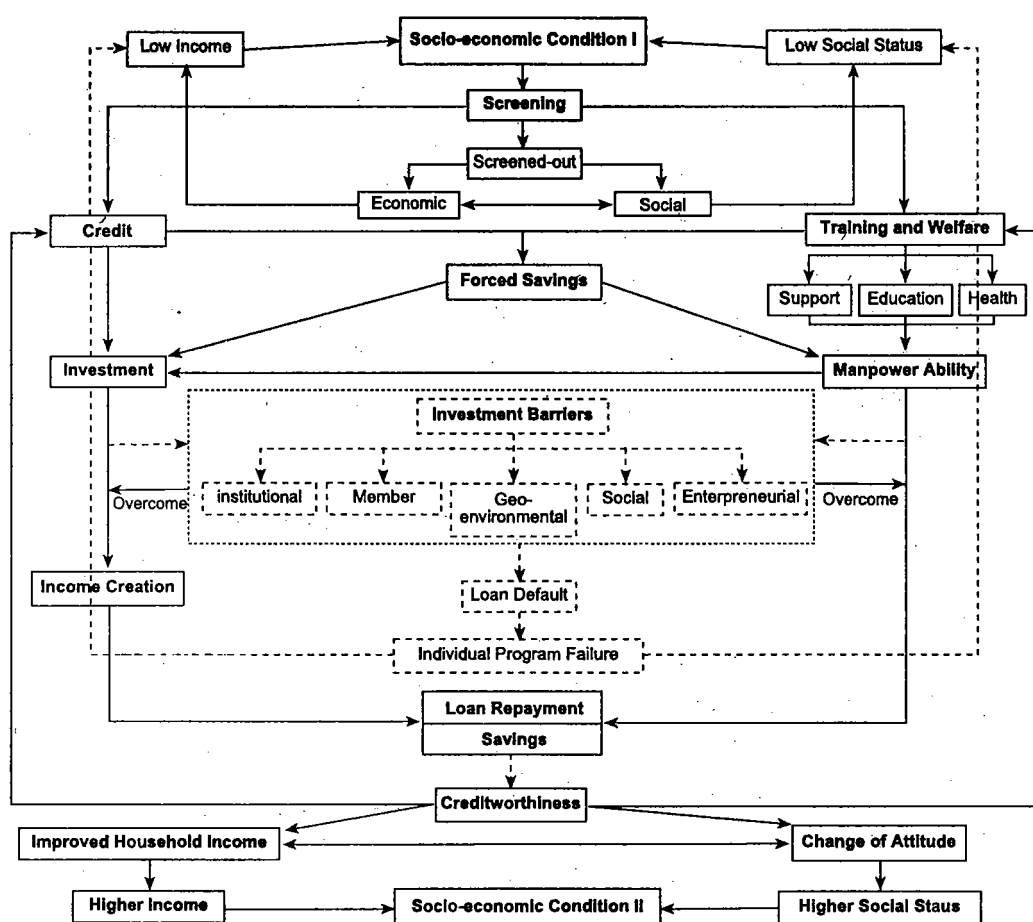


Fig. 1. Socio-economic Implications of Welfarist Microfinance Programs on the Poor

The availability of such savings helps to smooth-over the consumption of a person and this has a positive effect on one's manpower ability. At the same time, the existence of such a consumption-smoothing tool helps to ensure that investment money is utilized where it is supposed to be used, in the business.

As in any investment, however, there are risks and problems that arise, that can hamper one's ability to turn a profit. These problems that a person can incur are defined as investment barriers in the flowchart. Through the examination of the experiences of credit programmes around the world, five general categories of investment barriers have been identified.

The first are institutional barriers, which include problems associated with the organizational policy and strategy of the RFI, poor performance of staff members, and/or oversupply of credit¹⁹. These are barriers in the sense that the institutional features of RFIs might not be in tune with the situation of the

rural poor that they are trying to serve. For example, the amount and frequency of loan instalments may not fit the income cycles of the borrower or the methods used to collect instalments may be inconvenient. Such barriers can either hamper investment or lead to loan default and thus hurt the viability of the RFI.

The second are member²⁰ problems, which are particular to programmes utilizing group-lending methods. Incidents such as irregular attendance to weekly meetings and lateness in paying loans instalments can be detrimental for other members trying to obtain loans. Also, there is always the possibility of wilful default where the borrower never has the intention of repaying the loan in the first place.

Geo-environmental barriers, as the name suggests, are those that relate to geography and the environment. If a village is located in an isolated area, such places typically have poor transportation and marketing facilities. This means that there is a less developed rural economy and hence less self-employment opportunities. Environmental factors deal with calamities that Mother Nature can bring. Floods, diseases and the like can destroy the investment that a person makes and hence reduces or eliminates one's ability to repay loans.

Social barriers include things such as religious prejudice, socio-political interference and lack of family support. Such pressures can hamper a person's ability to make a success out of a microenterprise. For example, if a woman does not have the support of the family, especially the husband's support, it may make it difficult for her to make an investment in a business succeed.

Finally, there are entrepreneurial problems such as difficulties in selecting, implementing or changing investment activities as the market may require. Poor entrepreneurial skills have a direct impact upon the ability of a business to heighten one's socio-economic status. If a person does not have sufficient entrepreneurial talent to start-up or change to other activities when the market for what they are doing becomes saturated, this can lead to the failure of the business.

All of the above mentioned factors are problems one encounters when entering into a microfinance programme. The inability to overcome such investment barriers can eventually lead to loan default. This means that the individual has failed to reap the benefits the programme has to offer and/or the programme design has failed to meet the needs of borrowers. As the dotted lines leading from the individual programme failure box show, such a situation leads them back to their original socio-economic condition of low income and low social status.

While there may be those who fail to succeed in a microfinance programme, there are others who are able to overcome all the above-mentioned investment barriers. The manpower ability of an individual plays a vital role in helping one overcome these barriers and ideally lead to income creation and loan repayment. If all goes well, a person is able to save some of the profits, which can then be deposited in to a savings account, as depicted by the loan repayment/savings box.

From the economic viewpoint, the repayment of a loan and possible accumulation of savings allows the borrower to build some creditworthiness with the RFI. This creditworthiness enables one to gain more credit, possibly of a larger amount. This new loan can then be invested into improving the existing microenterprise or the starting of a new one. If a borrower is able to successfully repeat this cycle of credit, income creation, loan repayment/savings, creditworthiness, that person will eventually improve their household income. On the social side, continual participation in a programme also allows for continued access to training and welfare, which will steadily improve ones manpower ability.

After repeating this cycle, borrowers will eventually be able to experience improved household income and success in a microenterprise also leads to a change of attitude in ones abilities. Prior to obtaining a loan, the borrower may not have had much confidence in their abilities due to their low social status. By succeeding in a microfinance programme, a person is able to obtain higher income and higher social status, which in turn leads to the socio-economic condition II²¹ box, as is depicted in the bottom section of the figure 1.

Institutionalist: The way that institutionalists try to alleviate poverty is to provide quality credit and deposit facilities for their rural clients. The institutionalists method is depicted in Figure 2, with the credit functions on the left-hand side and savings functions on the right. The initial socio-economic condition²² of the poor who participate in institutionalist programmes is defined by a situation of low income and low social status. A person who wants to obtain a loan has to go through some kind of screening²³ process; the rules and regulations regarding this process will differ from one institution to another. The Bank Rakyat Indonesia Unit Desas (BRI-UD), for example, requires some form of collateral²⁴ and a recommendation from the village head. This recommendation is needed because if a person is late in their payment, the village head along with the bank worker will go to

that person's house and demand repayment. In this system, the village head is a willing participant because he will get a share of the branches profits. Thus there is an incentive for the village head to make people repay because non-payment by a borrower can reduce the profits of the branch.

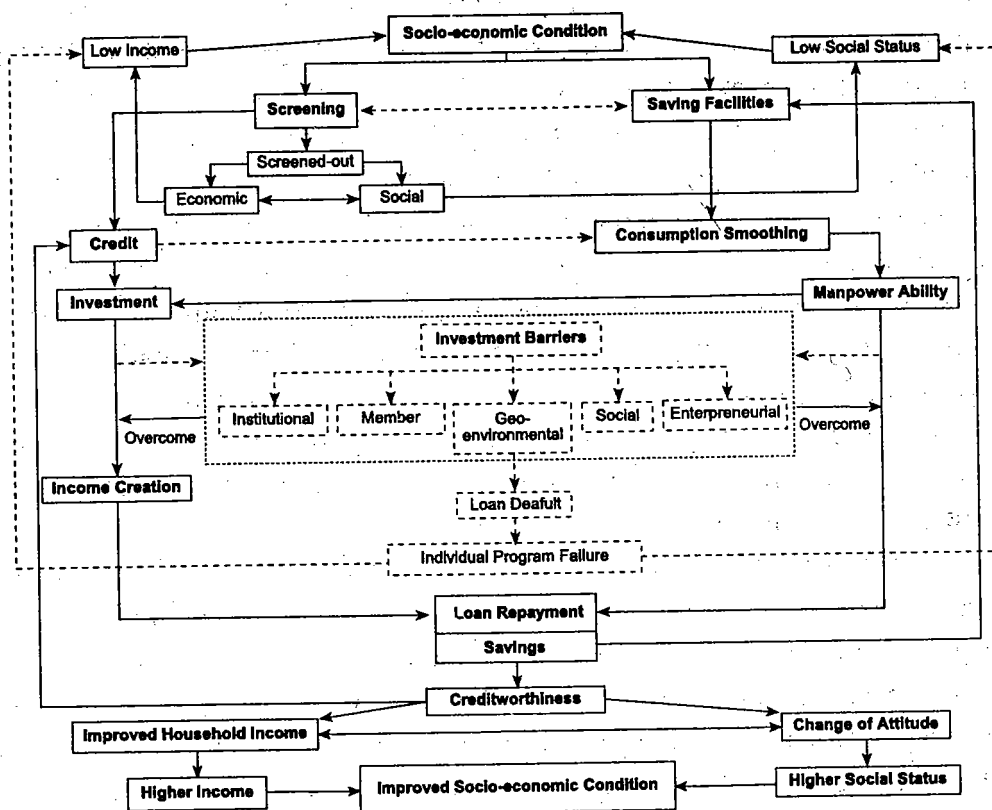


Fig. 2. Socio-economic Implications of Institutional Microfinance Programs on the Poor

Other institutions, such as credit unions, typically require a person to have a savings account with their institution. After the person has saved regularly he/she can become eligible for a loan either with or without collateral. Some credit unions require a savings account but will lend only a certain percentage of what the person has saved. Since the opening of a savings account as a screening requirement does not apply to all institutions, this part is depicted by the dotted line connecting the screening and savings facilities boxes.

Once the screening of clients is accomplished, those who are not considered to be good credit risks are screened-out. Similar to the welfarist model, a person will be screened-out for economic and/or social reasons. A person who is ineligible for a loan reverts back to the original socio-economic condition of low income and low social status. Those who pass the

screening process, however, obtain credit and can invest it in a microenterprise.

As with any investment, there are barriers that have to be overcome and this is where the key difference between the welfarists and institutionalist models to financial intermediation can be found. In general, it can be said that those with a higher level of manpower ability will have a greater chance of succeeding in a microenterprise. While welfarists, through their welfare and training programmes, actively try to raise the awareness level of the poor in order to improve their manpower ability, institutionalists are content with simply offering savings facilities, which act as a consumption-smoothing²⁵ tool. In recent years, some institutions have started to offer insurance and remittance services as well to improve the consumption smoothing ability of clients. Institutionalists believe that by having savings to cover such costs or by receiving credit for such purposes, delineated by the dotted line extending from the credit to consumption smoothing box, the manpower ability of that person can be enhanced.

This difference in ideology, however, has also led to a difference in the population that each institution serves. When looking at the poor, it becomes obvious that they should not be seen as being homogenous group and that within the poor, there are three basic subgroups that can be ascertained. These are the "extreme poor"²⁶ whose income is 40% below the poverty line; the "moderate poor" living just below the poverty line; and the "vulnerable non-poor" who are living above but close to the poverty line and constantly risk falling below it (Woods and Sharif 1997:67). Due to the fact that institutionalists do not offer training and welfare services similar to that of welfarists, experience has found that they typically exclude the "extreme poor" from programme participation. Although the people who borrow from institutionalist programmes are poor, they typically belong to the non-vulnerable and moderate poor groups and thus the degrees to which they are affected by each of the elements in the investment barriers box are less. For example, a person participating in an institutionalist programme would find institutional and entrepreneurial barriers as being the most difficult obstacle to overcome. Social and member barriers would be less of a concern, while the ability to cope with geo-environmental barriers would be similar to that of a person participating in a welfarist programme.

Those participating in welfarist programmes, however, have all five of these barriers working against them. In particular, the social barriers that members of welfarist face are quite considerable. Gender, racial, and religious

prejudices can play a disruptive role in enabling one to succeed in a microenterprise. Thus, the training and welfare activities conducted in welfarist programmes attempt to increase the social awareness level of their participants so that they can overcome such social barriers.

Nevertheless, those who fail to overcome these investment barriers follow the dotted lines of loan default, individual programme failure, and revert back to a socio-economic status of low income and low social status. Those who overcome investment barriers and are able to succeed in income creation are able to repay their loans, save money (if enough profit is made) and gain creditworthiness with the financial institution. Any savings that are accrued can be deposited in the savings facilities, which will enhance ones consumption smoothing capabilities and in turn increase their level of manpower ability to overcome investment barriers. On the economic side, creditworthiness leads to access to more credit, which can be invested in the same or different microenterprise, and lead to income creation, loan repayment/savings, and so on. The last portion of the flowchart is the same as the welfarist model. After going through the institutionalist cycle a number of times, the borrower will eventually find his/herself in an improved socio-economic condition²⁷.

Microfinance and Poverty Alleviation in Nepal

In Nepal there are a wide variety of institutions that are trying to utilize microfinance as a poverty alleviation tool. The Intensive Banking Programme (IBP), Small Farmers Development Programme (SFDP), Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW), Microcredit Project for Women (MCPW), Grameen replicators consisting of five Grameen Bikas Banks and two NGOs²⁸ (Nirdhan and Centre for Self-Help Development) are examples of the best-known institutions that provide financial services to the poor in Nepal. There are also a wide range of saving and credit organizations, cooperatives and NGOs providing financial services to those underserved by formal financial institutions.

Looking at table 1, it is evident that the three major poverty alleviation microfinance programmes in Nepal, the IBP, SFDP, and PCRW are experiencing problems in their viability due to poor repayment rates and difficulties in covering their costs of operations. Seibel et. al. (1998) in their study of microfinance in Nepal state that the "remedies to the disease of unviability seem clear: insistence on, and incentives for, timely repayment; elimination of interest rate subsidies in favour of cost-covering rates of

interest; and lowering of transaction costs" (Seibel et. al. 1998:308). The recent successes experienced by the transformation of SFDP sub-project offices (SPOs) into autonomous cooperatives, called Small Farmer's Cooperatives Limited (SFCL), is cited as an example of how such a remedy can be achieved.

The same study also takes an in depth look at the Purbanchal Grameen Bikas Bank, a Grameen replicator located in the plain area of Eastern Nepal. A comparison is made between the performances of the Purbanchal with that of the NGO run replicators, two NGOs supported by the Rural Self-Help Fund²⁹ (RSHF), i.e., Adarsha Krishak Samanwaya Samiti (Adarsha) and Vyccu Bachat Tatha Rin Sahakari Samstha (Vyccu), and two cooperatives operating in Nepal, i.e., SFCL in Bhumisthan, Dhading and Navajiban Cooperative Limited (Navajiban) in Dhangadi. It is found that government-owned poverty lending institutions have a much harder time in achieving viability in comparison to NGOs and cooperatives. As can be seen from table 2, the cooperatives seem to be performing the best in terms of financial self-sufficiency, followed by the two NGOs supported by the RSHF. Even among the Grameen replicators, the financial self-sufficiency figures are higher for the NGO run replicator in comparison to the government run bank.

The main conclusions and recommendations from this study are in line with the institutionalist mode of thinking. The study recommends a need to remove all interest rate subsidies and charging of rates that over costs of operation, which not only distort the rural financial markets and set up unfair competition to market-oriented establishments but also undermine the mobilization of savings. Looking at table 2, institutions such as Navajiban and Adarsha, which have the highest degrees of self-sufficiency, also have 100% of its loans financed from savings collected and thus mobilization of savings can be seen as a key factor in helping microfinancial institutions reach self-sufficiency. Thus Seibel et. al. argue for the privatization of government-owned institutions and a stop to all practices of using MFIs as channels for programmes with emphasis placed on internal resource mobilization and promotion of linkages between institutions belonging to various financial sub-sectors. They also argue for a need to select and test successful microcredit, microsavings and microinsurance products and strategies and their dissemination throughout the formal, semiformal and informal financial sectors (Seibel et al. 1998:327).

Table 1: Lending and Viability Figures of Major Poverty Lending Programmes in Nepal (1995/96)

Program	Loan Disbursement			Repayment (NRs. million)	Overdue (NRs. million)	Recovery rate (%)	On-lending interest rate (%) ²		Subsidy dependency index ³
	No. of borrowers	Amount ¹	Avg amt (NRs.)				Actual	Required	
IBP	37,082	975.92	26,318	529.69	605.60	46.66	18.10	42.5	1.35
SFDP	63,497	690.21	10,870	503.53	364.19	58.00	15.55	43.5	1.80
PCRW	9,270	74.64	8,052	34.27	19.65	63.56	15.55	72.4	3.66

Source: Sharma and Nepal (1997) and Seibel, Pant, and Dhungel (1998)

Note: 1 Amounts are in NRs. Million

2 The interest rates stated are for 1991/92

3 Subsidy dependency index = (Required rate - Average rate)/Average rate (Jacob Yaron, The World Bank)

Table 2: Operational and financial self sufficiency in six MFIs in Nepal, 1995

	Grameen Replicators		Rural Self Reliance Fund		Cooperatives	
	Bank	NGO	Vyccu	Adarsha	SFCL	Navajiban
Lending rate of interest	20	20	18	18	15-18	12-21
On-time repayment rate	100	100	97	100	64	92
Mean loan size (NRs. '000)	3.15	3.39	9.2	13.72	6.66	84.13
Savings (Million NRs.) ¹	13.92	1.03	0.23	1.20	0.56	17.86
Loans outstanding (Million NRs.) ¹	78.74	6.56	0.45	1.19	4.94	17.84
Savings/loans outgoing (%) ¹	18	16	51	100	11	100
Degree of partial financial self-sufficiency (%)	18	64 ²	103	96	136	127
Degree of full financial self-sufficiency (%)	15	59 ²	71	84	82	113

Source: Seibel et. al. (1998:320 and 325)

Note: 1 Figures are for December 1995

2 These data pertain to July 1996

While the recommendations made in this study are very important and can go a long way to help develop the rural financial landscape, there are certain things that must be considered when following the institutionalist path to microfinance. Firstly, there are the claims that institutionalist programmes are better in that they can reach large numbers of people and in this manner have a positive impact on poverty alleviation. Studies have found, however, that their outreach³⁰, in terms of depth, has been limited to the moderate and vulnerable non-poor households (Hulme and Mosely 1996). This exclusion of the extreme poor is only natural since the institutionalist line of thinking is based on capitalistic principles of free competition, less government intervention, and the leaving of economic development to free market forces. As Johnson (1998: 799) notes, the "economic and social processes in the late twentieth century appear to be producing a 'South in the North' at the same time as rapid development in some contexts is resulting in the emergence of a 'North in the South'". In other words, the institutionalist system inherently makes it difficult for the most vulnerable segments of society to gain access to the financial services it has to offer.

Institutionalists may argue that the exclusion of this group can be considered as an acceptable trade-off to developing a healthy financial landscape, but considering the severity of poverty in Nepal, it is an issue that must be given due consideration. The Nepali government divides those living below the poverty line into two categories, the poor and ultra poor. While the exact definition of the ultra poor is not given, the poverty line³¹ is estimated at standing around NRs. 4404 per person per year. From this measure, it is estimated that 42% of the population in Nepal lives below the poverty line, with 24.9% of this group considered being poor and 17.1% being ultra-poor. Considering the large proportion of the population living in such an ultra-impooverished state, poverty alleviation programs need to be able to include as much of this segment of society in their activities as possible.

There are also questions concerning a central tenet of the institutionalist perspective, which insists that credit programs must eventually be able to function without subsidies. The Rural Financial Market theories advocate that institutions should charge interest rates that cover their costs of operations and that the poor are willing and able to pay high interest rates for their loans. For example, it has been found that in some countries moneylenders can charge interest rates of over 100%. If a RFI can cover its costs of operations by charging interest of 30% to 40%, the poor could and would gladly pay this rate of interest.

While it is ideal for an institution to function without subsidies, institutions that provide social services to their clientele can find this difficult to achieve given the costs associated with the provision of such services. This is the biggest dilemma facing welfarists in that while they are able to include more of the poor in their programs, they are not able to sustain themselves without subsidies. The reason welfarist programmes can include more of the poor into their program lies in their provision of training and welfare. As mentioned earlier, poverty is both an economic and a social issue. While credit can improve the economic side of poverty, training and welfare services are required to improve the social elements of poverty. By increasing the consciousness level of the poor through the provision of literacy, health education and child care services, for example, many of the social elements of poverty can be improved. As was seen in figure 1, the provision of such services enables people to improve their manpower ability which can help people to make a success out of their investment and thus impact positively on repayment rates and savings mobilization of the institution as a whole.

Pressures exerted by donors, government and the like have forced welfarist programs to seriously consider the issue of sustainability. In particular, the expansion of lending activities, in order to take advantage of economies of scale, and maintenance of high repayment rates have generally been regarded as key factors in attaining this goal. This pressure can have a positive influence, by forcing programmes to become efficient in its credit operations. However, it can also lead to a dilution in the programme ideology by shift in the focus of attention to the credit aspects of the programme and a reduction in the attention paid to the extent of training and welfare provided. This in turn can force programmes to lend larger loans, which in turn leads to the exclusion of the poorest of the poor; the very group that welfarists were originally designed to help.³²

However, when looking at the root of the "zero subsidy is best" line of thinking, it becomes difficult to say that this is an absolute truth. Morduch (2000) sums up the argument with an excellent example:

Consider a program lending exclusively to poor borrowers. It would have to charge, say, 30% per year in order to break even. In contrast, a formal sector program aimed at richer borrowers could break even when charging say 15% per year since it can easily take advantage of returns to scale. Loans at 5% per year will seem appealing to *all* households when the alternative

formal sector charge 15%. Nearly without fail, such *absolutely* cheap credit has led to subsidy traps. Loans around 20%, however, are not seen as gifts. The loans are cheap relative to full costs, but they are not absolutely cheap. Mistargeting has thus not been a major concern for those programs providing moderate-size subsidies. The lesson from the failures of the 1960s and 1970s is to avoid excessive subsidies. The lesson is not to avoid subsidies altogether. (Morduch 2000:624)

Therefore, if modest subsidies can help welfarist institutions break even, further thinking and experimentation is needed to see how welfarist institutions can be integrated into the financial landscape.

In order to examine this issue further, the following sections will examine in further detail two of the oldest welfarist style organizations in Nepal, the SFDP and PCRW. From the examination of the experiences of these two institutions, an alternative model will be proposed at the end of this paper to show that further experimentation is needed and efforts should be made to try and help welfarists attain sustainability.

The Small Farmers Development Programme: The SFDP, the largest target group oriented poverty alleviation programme in Nepal, was first launched by the ADB/N as a project in 1975 to better enable small farmers³³ to receive credit and other supporting services from line agencies so as to improve their living standards. A sub-project office (SPO), an ADB/N office, responsible for SFDP, is established in a Village Development Committee (VDC) and is staffed by a group organizer (GO) and a women group organizer whenever there is a Women's Development Programme in the VDC. The GO is basically responsible for all aspects of the programme including motivating people, making annual plans, assessing project viability, sanctioning and disbursing loans, collecting repayments and savings, and making line agency services such as training, marketing, raw material supply, family planning, adult literacy available to members.

Farmers are organized into groups of five to twelve members and loans of up to NRs. 30,000 per member are provided on an individual, group or inter-group basis. Failure to repay loans can halt disbursement of loans to other members or prevent new loans from being disbursed until all loans are repaid. While the group loans were supposed to do away with collateral requirements, the actual reality finds that farmers must also provide some physical collateral

to obtain loans. The average loans size for 1994/95 disbursed by SFDP was NRs. 10,870 and the recovery rate of loans was only 58%.

There are many problems facing the SFDP especially in the management of the programme. It has been found that non-poor are being included in the SFDP groups and the practice of requiring collateral on top of the group formation may be a reason for this phenomenon. The programme tends to work well in areas with a well-trained and dedicated GO, but the lack of incentives for good performance and lack of attention paid by the ADBN³⁴ to the programme has led to a deterioration of a programme that had experienced success during its project phase.

In light of the problems being faced by the SFDP, the GTZ in collaboration with the ADBN launched a technical assistance project in 1987 to try and transform SFDP SPOs into autonomous financial intermediaries, owned and managed by the members. By creating Small Farmer's Cooperatives Limited (SFCL), this project has been able to implement the SFDP in a more cost-efficient and sustainable manner. As Seibel et al. (1998:310) note, with the implementation of the SFCL concept in four SPOs in Dhading, farmers were able to "mobilize their own resources, which reached 20% of all loans outstanding within the first two years of their existence; the repayment rate of ADBN channelling loans (which continued unabated) virtually doubled; and the repayment rate of loans from internal resources jumped to 98% as of 7/1995."

While problems still exist for these SFCLs to reach full autonomy, the initial success of the project has led to the replication of this concept and provides evidence as to how to transform an unviable government programme into one that covers their costs of operations. According to Kievelitz et al., two important shortcomings are that:

the definition of small farmers seems to have been applied quite loosely. It is quite likely that the program is also benefiting the relatively better off amongst the poor. Further the program as yet has not been able to reach out to the marginal areas of the country. The SFCLs have as yet weak linkages with services agencies, which limits the effectiveness of many investments that the farmers make with their loans (1998:27)

From examining the problems of the SFDP and the successes of the SFCL, poor management can be seen as the major factor that has hurt the

viability of the SFDP. The transference of the management of the SPOs to its members has improved the overall supervision of the programme and thus its viability. However, another reason that can be cited as contributing to the poor performance of the SFDP is the poor linkages that it has had with government line agencies that are supposed to provide training and welfare services to the poor. Even the SFCLs have weak linkages with various service agencies and this can be seen as a problem that was carried over from the SFDP.

Being a programme run under the ADBN, it is only natural that the focus of the programme be placed upon its financial aspects. However, the lack of attention or priority placed on the social aspects of the programme, can also be seen as a contributing to poor loan repayment and the requirement of collateral in spite of the use of a group lending system to try to improve loan recovery; such actions inevitably leads to the disbursement of loans to those who are better off and the exclusion of the poorest of the poor from programme participation. The successes of the SFCL are an encouraging phenomenon but the fact that it is benefiting those who are relatively better off amongst the poor is not surprising. The ability to manage such groups requires a certain degree of education, which is something that those living in abject poverty typically do not have. Even if poorer members are included in the SFCL, such members will typically require a greater degree of assistance in terms of training and welfare activities if they are to overcome the various investment barriers shown in figure 1. Stronger linkages with government line agencies to provide social services are required in the SFCL programme is to see success in terms of the participation of the vulnerable poor.

Production Credit for Rural Women

The PCRW is a programme initiated by the then Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development (now known as the Ministry of Local Development), with the collaboration of the NBL, RBB, ADBN, UNICEF, and other line agencies in 1982. Given the disadvantaged status of women in a male-dominated society such as Nepal, the basic aim of the PCRW was to "institutionalize the programme within the existing financial and institutional infrastructure of the government – to mobilize the government's root mechanisms to serve the interests and needs of the women rather than creating a separate state machinery for women's programmes." (AFDA 1996:50) Thus the program focused on creating women's groups of between four to ten

members who belong to low-income families having annual per capita income less than or equal to NRs. 2,511 with the following broad objectives:

- 1) Improve economic and social status of rural women in the society, accomplished through a combination of income generating activities, training and community development activities;
- 2) Establish self-reliant women's groups enabling them to initiate and undertake productive activities;
- 3) Integrate women into the regular service delivery system for credit and technical support services;
- 4) Develop the capacity of Women's Development Division (WDD) to ensure that women's interest are reflected in the development policies of the country. (AFDA 1996:12)

The large majority of loans are given for the purchase of livestock and the ultimate aim is to develop these groups into "viable saving and credit cooperatives which would thereafter stand and manage on their own without outside help" (Sharma and Nepal 1997:42). The key player in this system is the staff of the Women's Development Section (WDS), which motivate and assist members in selecting the right type of project and recommend them for loans to the IBP or ADBN branch working in the area. Loans that are approved are given under a group guarantee scheme without collateral and the supervision of loans, social and community development activities are carried out by staff of the WDS. Problems have been experienced, however, in developing the leadership capacity of members given the fact that once group leaders are chosen, they tend to remain in that position as opposed to the rotation of leadership roles among group members as envisioned by the programme.

This problem of developing leadership has consequently made it difficult to realize the graduation of groups into autonomous cooperatives and this may in part be explained by the large role that the programme staff have to play in the running of the programme. As was mentioned earlier, the main aim of PCRW was to institutionalize into the overall government infrastructure the development needs of women. In practice, however, the training and welfare aspects of the programme have fallen solely on the shoulders of the field staff due to a lack of cooperation between PCRW and district line agencies; services that members require are not available on a timely basis and any services that are provided were "fulfilled depending upon

personal requests and relationship of WDO and line agency staff. In addition, the WDO's expressed that they had to send repeated requests and reminders for line agency support and cooperation" (AFDA 1998:56). Heavy reliance upon the field staff can be seen as a reason for why field staffs are regarded as "mothers" or "guardians of the group rather than trying to relegate that role to the members themselves resulting in the programme being viewed as a gift from the government rather than creating groups that can demand services that government line agencies have to offer them.

Another problem with the programme is the high cost of service delivery with the World Bank estimating that the PCRW would have to raise their lending rates of interest to 72.4% in order to cover their costs of operations. Sharma and Nepal (1997) estimate that two-thirds of the staff time is devoted to the deliver of social service aspect of the programme which can account for the high costs associated with service delivery. Pressures to attain sustainability, however, have created a need to expand the programme and lend more loans to try and generate income. These pressures, while positive in terms of trying to make the system more efficient, has also resulted in a shift in the programme focus from community development to the credit activities. Given the fact that women are the targeted beneficiaries of the programme, reduction in the social intermediation aspects of the programme will make it more difficult for members to succeed within the programme.

The PCRW is also facing problems with a high rate of staff turnover, which can also be seen as raising the costs of operations due to the expense associated with the training of new people. The major problem is that 72% of the staff members are hired on a temporary basis and whenever new and permanent forms of employment are available, workers tend to leave the programme. The hiring of staff on a more permanent basis with the provision of incentives for good performance can go a long way in reducing costs associated with staff training and thus help to reduce the amount of subsidies the programme is receiving.

Conceptual Framework for an Alternative Approach to Microfinance

As was seen from the descriptions of the SFDP and PCRW, poor management has been a major factor affecting the performance of these programmes. Both of these programmes, when they first started, had met with considerable success and this helped to fuel expansion of programmes to other districts. As the programmes grew in size, however, they tended to lose their

effectiveness and this is a reason for why government programmes have not performed as well as the cooperatives or NGO run institutions seen in Table 2.

There are a number of reasons that can account for this decline in effectiveness. The first deals with the lack of qualified staff to keep up with the expansion of programmes. In terms of the SFDP, the rapid expansion of the programme had forced the ADBN "to place a person from the regular staff pool as a GO. Such a person possesses neither the required skills nor is motivated to work with the rural poor. This practice has an adverse effect on the quality of the programme" (Sharma and Nepal 1997:37). The PCRW, on the other hand, has a problem with a limited number of field staff, which acts as an impediment to the expansion of the programme. At the same time, the high turnover of staff not only adds to the cost of the programme but also affects its effectiveness. Such problems can be addressed, however, through the provision of incentives to workers for good performance.

A more important reason for the decline in performance, however, can be attributed to the dilution of programme ideology. When looking at the history of the microfinance movement, the overall focus has tended to be placed on the financial, i.e. saving and credit, aspects of programmes. While it is realized that the social intermediation aspects do play a positive role, insistence on being able to function without subsidies inevitably leads to a decline in the quality and quantity of services provided; more time spent by staff to extend larger loans which results in a decline in amount of time spent on social intermediation activities and exclusion of the more vulnerable sections of the poor.

The point that this paper is trying to make is that microfinance programmes aimed at the poorest of the poor need to give equal weight to both the financial and social intermediation aspects. In the case of Nepal, however, the focus of the government has been leaning more towards the financial aspects and this attitude is reflected in the government policies towards microfinance. For example, in the IBP, the government requires commercial banks to allocate 12% of their loan portfolio to the priority sector but there has been no policy mandate to direct district line agencies to concentrate a certain percentage of their resources to service provision to microfinance programmes. While the SFDP and PCRW conceptually have linkages with line agencies, the actual practice has seen little cooperation between the SFDP and PCRW with line agencies and has thus contributed negatively to their overall performance.

In order to overcome these deficiencies, figure 3 provides a conceptual framework for an alternative model to microfinancial intermediation. The main idea behind this framework is to have better integration of government welfare policies with the activities of microfinancial programmes. As was mentioned earlier, the costs associated with social service provision has been a major impediment to the sustainability of welfarist institutions and pressures to attain sustainability has led to the exclusion of the extreme poor from programme participation. Government support for training and welfare activities can help welfarists to attain sustainability as long as the financial side of their operation is conducted in a viable manner.

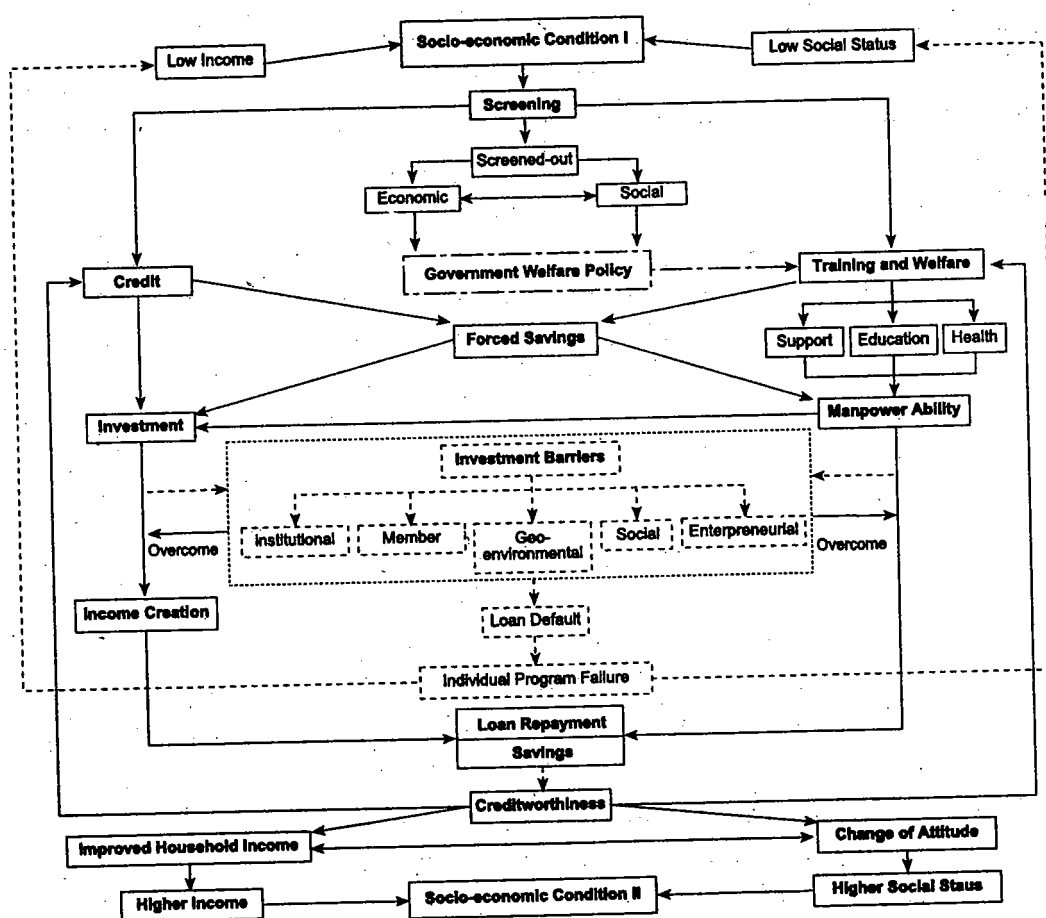


Fig. 3. Conceptual Framework of the Socio-economic Implications of an Alternative Microfinance Program Model on the Poor

Looking at Figure 3, we see that the alternative model is based on the welfarist flowchart. The government welfare policy box is catching those who are being screened out with an arrow leading towards the training and welfare box. There are many ways that such a system of cooperation between the microfinance programme and the government welfare policy could be developed. If there is an overlapping of the social services being offered by the government and the welfarist microfinance programme, discussions can be initiated to try to integrate the programmes that each are operating. For example, if a government has an adult literacy programme in place and the NGO is also has a programme of their own, an integration of the two programmes is a possibility. If the government is running a programme that the microfinance programme does not offer, members can be introduced to it and this would further the social empowerment of its members.

Direct subsidies by the government for a social programme offered by a microfinance institution are another possibility. In some cases, the NGO may be better able to provide services in a certain district than the government. Another possibility is that the NGO social programme is of a much better quality and so the government could take the money it spends on its own programme and subsidize the one run by the NGO. Such subsidies, if sufficient in amount, might even enable the microfinance programme to expand the variety of social services they provide³⁵ and thus lead to further social empowerment for participating members. For such an option to be even considered, however, the NGO running the microfinance programme would have to show a considerable degree of success and efficiency in its lending operations.³⁶

For the extreme poor, the extension of loans to them does not necessarily have to occur immediately. Many institutions have found difficulties in lending to this extreme poor group. A more practical solution might be to get them into the welfare programme so that they can gain access to basic health, literacy and other training to improve their manpower ability. Forcing participants to maintain a regular savings habit can also teach them the value of doing so. If a programme is able to improve the social poverty of the extreme poor group, it will have at least had an impact and provide them with better manpower ability to tackle the economic side of poverty.

The politics and logistics involved in such an endeavour may seem quite daunting but also point out that there are alternatives for welfarist microfinance programs trying to obtain sustainability. An environment of mutual trust between government and NGOs would have to be established

before any such alternative could be considered. As was mentioned earlier, the present model for development in most of the world relies upon market forces. This makes welfare programs all the more necessary in order to protect the most vulnerable. This is not to say that all programs must be welfarist in nature but that there is room in the financial landscape for subsidized welfare programmes that are aimed towards the poorest of the poor.

Much of the literature, pertaining to sustainability aspects of microfinance programmes, tends to only evaluate the economic aspects of the programme. Investments are also needed to help people overcome the social side of poverty as well. While the thinking behind welfarist programmes was to accomplish this, the pressure for sustainability has started to exclude the poorest of the poor and this is something that has to be taken seriously. The alternative model proposed in this paper, might be one of the options that are available to include the most vulnerable in the development process.

Conclusion

Throughout this past two decades, there has been much enthusiasm for microfinance programmes as a method to alleviate poverty. To gain a better understanding of the socioeconomic forces at work within microfinance programmes, flowcharts depicting institutionalist and welfarist approaches to financial intermediation were presented. Research into the outreach and sustainability aspects of microfinance programmes has found that institutionalists, by and large, have excluded the poor from participation. Welfarists have also felt pressure from donors to expand their scale of operation and become sustainable. This pressure, however, has led to the exclusion of the extreme poor from programme participation.

Examination of the SFDP and PCRW in Nepal had found that poor management has been a major impediment to programme performance. While the provision of proper incentives to workers can help to overcome some of the problems, the flowcharts showing the socio-economic implications of microfinance programmes have tried to illustrate that the social intermediation aspects of programmes are just as important as the credit side and the lack of cooperation and coordination of these programmes with district line agencies can also be seen as a major reason for poor programme performance. The intent of this paper is not to discredit the valuable contribution that institutionalists can play in alleviating poverty through the development of a healthy financial landscape, but tries to point out that it may not be the only alternative available for the creation of sustainable institutions. The provision

of government subsidies and/or amalgamation of the social services provided by the NGOs and government might be one way to lessen the financial burdens taken on by the microfinance programme. Such an alternative might be an interesting starting point for cooperation between NGOs and government. Further research into how the alternative model presented here could work, might lead to a much more dynamic financial landscape than the one that is presently in existence.

Notes

- 1 In terms of the system used to deliver credit, in order to gain access to a loan, one needed to fill out paperwork and have collateral. Since many of the poor are illiterate and have very little they can offer as collateral, this system made it extremely difficult for them to access these low interest loans. There are many other reasons why these programs failed to reach the poor and these are extremely well documented. See Frank Ellis (1992), 152-174.
- 2 See Adams et al., eds. (1984) for a full explanation of the Rural Financial Market theory.
- 3 This means that branches have to be located close to the villages of their clients, have office hours that reflect the work schedule of rural people, and generally provide services that are needed by them. This is something that first-generation credit programs failed to provide.
- 4 Group lending is system whereby members of a group are responsible for each other's loans. If a person in their group cannot repay their loan, other members can also lose access to credit. The social pressure that is created to repay takes the place of physical collateral that is common with most bank loans.
- 5 Microenterprises should not be confused with small-scale enterprises. The distinguishing features of microenterprises are that they require small sums of money and utilize very simple technology. Common examples of microenterprises in the developing world would include activities such as chicken rearing, rickshaw pulling, peddle-vending, etc.
- 6 World Bank, "Sustainable Banking with the Poor (SBP): A Worldwide Inventory of Microfinance Institutions," <<http://www-esd.worldbank.org/html/esd/agr/sbp/micro/micro1.html>>
- 7 Chambers (1983) argues that poverty is an inter-linking of powerlessness, vulnerability, physical weakness, poverty, and isolation factors.

- 8 In the following description and analysis, the words in bold correspond to the words found in the boxes of the flowchart.
- 9 This is defined as a situation characterized by low savings and poor consumption.
- 10 Low social status is defined as a situation characterized by little power and little awareness.
- 11 Defined as the socioeconomic condition of an individual characterized by low income and low social status, consisting of the extreme and moderate poor.
- 12 The process used to accept or reject potential borrowers. In terms of the group lending method, the members of the group are the ones who decide who gets credit and who does not.
- 13 Rejection due to economic reasons, i.e., a person is too poor, does not have a regular income.
- 14 For example, group members perceive them too be too poor or too far down the social ladder to be accepted.
- 15 Since welfarist programmes give loans without collateral, group-lending methods are utilized. At group meetings, on top of collecting loan installments, various training and welfare activities are also conducted. For example, moral support from group members and bank workers, the forcing of regular savings to teach borrowers the value of saving small amounts of money on a regular basis, literacy and health training, and other activities that can raise the awareness level of the borrower.
- 16 The Emergency Fund of the Grameen Bank, for example, requires borrowers to deposit 5% of a loan over 1000 takas to be deposited. This is collected to hedge against default when accidents, death, or crisis hits a borrower.
- 17 For members of the Grameen Bank, two takas must be deposited in the Group Fund at every weekly meeting. Up to half of the funds in this account can be borrowed, though group approval is needed, to help those that are struggling.
- 18 Defined as the health and knowledge level of a borrower. Good health enables a person to work productively, which enhances their ability to repay loans. The more knowledge one has, the better one is able to deal with the socioeconomic environment around them, which can help to ensure that better quality investment is made. These have a direct impact on the investment; the arrow pointing from the manpower ability to the investment box depicts this fact.

- 19 The oversupply of credit refers to two things: a) the loan amount extended is too big for the borrower to manage. b) The popularity of the microfinance movement has led to the growth in number of programmes available. If a village has numerous programmes, one can borrow from different institutions and end up owing more money than they are capable of repaying.
- 20 Defined as the people participating in the microfinance programme.
- 21 Defined as the socioeconomic condition of an individual who has managed to cross the poverty line.
- 22 The term *socioeconomic condition I* is not used here as it was in the welfarist model. This is because those joining an institutionalist program are not necessarily below the poverty line when they join, i.e., they are from the vulnerable non-poor and non-poor group.
- 23 For programmes, which utilize group-lending methods, members are the ones who screen other members. However, many institutionalists lend to individuals and thus require collateral and/or a recommendation from a village leader or guarantor.
- 24 For the BRI-UD, collateral does not necessarily have to be land, a common practice of most banks. It can be a household item but in actual practice, repossession does not occur because of the role of the village head.
- 25 Defined as money used for emergency consumption needs such as food shortages, sickness, funerals, weddings, that will help to maintain ones lifestyle to meet various contingencies.
- 26 This extreme poor group is also known as the core-poor, ultra-poor, and poorest of the poor in the academic literature.
- 27 The term socioeconomic condition II was not used here because people participating in institutionalist programs are not necessarily those who are moving from below to above the poverty line. For example, a vulnerable non-poor person may be able to get rid of their vulnerability and stabilize their income to that which is above the poverty line and thus the term improved socioeconomic condition is used here.
- 28 Grameen replication is being engaged by both banks and NGOs as a way to test which method is better suited for the situation of Nepal.
- 29 The NRB has tried to support selected NGOs to become financial intermediaries with the establishment of a Rural Self-Help Fund which provides funds at rate of eight percent per annum on loans to NGOs which direct the loans to beneficiary groups at or around the prevailing bank

rates with the difference between borrowing and lending rate to take care of the overhead expenses of NGOs. The study conducted by Seibel et al. refers to this program as the Rural Self-Reliance Fund.

- 30 This term connotes two things, scale and depth. Outreach of scale refers to the overall numbers being reached by the institution. Outreach of depth refers to how well institutions are reaching the extreme poor.
- 31 The poverty line is estimated as being the annual amount of expenditure required to purchase a daily caloric intake of 2124 calories per year and other essential non-food items. Per capita annual expense to purchase 2124 calories per person per day is estimated at NRs. 2637.
- 32 A good example of this can be seen with the Grameen Bank when it needed to expand their scale of operations to address the sustainability issue. Since there are costs associated with the establishment of new branches, as of 1992 the Grameen Bank focussed its efforts on expanding the number of members within its existing infrastructure. This was accomplished by intensifying the workload of bank workers by increasing the number of groups he/she was responsible for from six to eight per center. The problem of doing this is that it reduces the amount of time a bank worker can spend monitoring groups and the uses of the loans. At the same time, there is external and internal pressure to maintain high repayment rates and thus bank workers tend to get appraised on their ability to recover loans as opposed to their supervision of them (Rahman, 1999, 75-76). Thus workers will begin to concentrate their efforts on the credit aspects of the program and spend less time on the social intermediation aspects.
- 33 Small farmers were first defined as those having a per capita annual income of less than NRs. 950, which was raised to NRs. 2,500 in 1991 (NRB, Vol. 2 1994:215)
- 34 The regular lending of ADBN constitutes over 80% of total lending volume and thus the SFDP does not get as much attention as required.
- 35 Karim and Osada (1998), for example, state that the implementation of a formal child-care system could be something that would reduce dropouts of Grameen Bank members and thus positively contribute to the sustainability of the Bank.
- 36 A good candidate for receiving such subsidies would be a programme that shows itself to be financially sustainable but is having problems obtaining economic sustainability.

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TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN IN SOUTH ASIA: A SKETCH

Mira Mishra

This brief note seeks to draw a sketch of the regime of trafficking in South Asia, particularly in relation to the trafficking of girls and women for prostitution. To this end, it enters the theme by describing and examining the conceptualizations and interventions on trafficking, and explores "complicitness" in trafficking and the relationship between trafficking and prostitution. Above all, it sketches a preliminary "model" of the regimes of demand and supply of trafficking.

Introduction

Trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, has received sporadic and intermittent attention from different states and interstate organs for quite some time. The 1895 treaty on the prevention of "trafficking in women" in Paris, the 1904 international agreement on the suppression of the "White Slave Trade", which aimed to "combat the procuring of women and girls for immoral purposes", the 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others were some such steps. Of the many recent interstate initiatives for controlling trafficking, among others, are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the adoption, by the UN, in 1994, of the resolution on the "traffic in women and girls" (see Wijers and Chew 1997: Chapter 2 for an extended treatment). Following a period in which trafficking had become nearly synonymous with prostitution, the 1995 Beijing Conference identified many *other* forms, aspects and conditions (e.g. false marriage, forced labor) of trafficking.

However, what constitutes trafficking of human beings has been a matter of much discussion and fairly heated debate and controversy. Definitions differ in the extent to which they are *inclusive*, the extent to which they are

detailed, the extent to which they are *gender specific* and the extent to which they are sensitive to the *regional context*. The UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson (UN 1999) views "debt bondage, forced prostitution and false marriage" as different expressions of trafficking, a definition which is a somewhat inclusive but sketchy, i.e. lacking in detail. Some definitions are relatively inclusive as well as detailed. The UN (A/Res/49/166 adopted on December 23, 1994), for example, views trafficking as "the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national and international borders, largely from developing countries and some countries with economies in transition, with the end goal of forcing women and girls into sexually or economically oppressive and exploitative situations for the profit of recruiters, traffickers and crime syndicates, as well as other illegal activities related to trafficking such as forced domestic labor, false marriage, clandestine employment and false adoption". Still some other definitions are detailed in a legally oriented way: [Trafficking includes] "All acts and attempted acts, attempted recruitment, transportation within or across borders, purchase, sale, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person involving the use of deception and coercion including the use or threat of force or the abuse of authority or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding such persons, whether for pay or not, in involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive), in forced or bonded labor, or in slave-like conditions, in a community other than the one in which such person lived at the time of the original deception, coercion or debt bondage (GAATW 1999: 11). Finally, some other definitions are somewhat more sensitive to the South Asian context and but at the same time much too restrictive. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), for example, agrees that trafficking in the region is of a specific character, shows great concern against trafficking and also agrees that combating trafficking in women and children remains urgent. But, at the same time, it views trafficking *solely* in the context of prostitution (see the SAARC convention on "combating trafficking on women and children for prostitution"). It is necessary, in any case, that trafficking should be viewed inclusively while at the same time remaining sensitive to its economic, political, cultural as well as regional and global contexts. Only such a conceptualization can be instrumental in paving the way for its eventual control.

As the SAARC formulation indicates, during the last two decades, the gendered context of human trafficking has received considerable attention in South Asia (also see Asmita 1998: 7-11). Within South Asia, the most

commonly discussed regime of trafficking is that of Nepali girls and women who are trafficked to India (IPEC, 1999: 1, Asmita 1998: 7-11). Nepal is often noted as the most fertile place for traffickers to play their game. The Indian Health Organization has noted, for example that there were 100,000 Nepali women and girls in Indian brothels and that 35 percent of them were trafficked [involuntarily] for various reasons (*Times of India*, January 2, 1989, cited in O'dea 1993: 7). In addition, the government of Nepal has officially announced that there were 200,000 Nepali women working in brothels in India (O'dea 1993: 7). Regionally, India is generally the destination of trafficking in South Asia (Asmita 1998: 10). In Bangladesh, the government has admitted that "a few thousand women and girls" have been trafficked to South Asian countries, particularly to India and the West Asian countries for labor, prostitution and other purposes (ILO-IPEC 1999)

The amount of literature on trafficking in girls and women far exceeds those on trafficking on infants, boys, men and the aged. But such trafficking does take place extensively. Trafficking in children is increasing in Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. These children are apparently trafficked into Thailand (ILO-IPEC 1999) Similarly, trafficking of the aged is increasing in scale in the Sub-Mekong region (GAATW 1999: 7). Nonetheless, it appears from a survey of literature in trafficking, that trafficking on girls and women has been increasing within the recent decades within South and Southeast Asia and, much more recently, in Eastern Europe. As a consequence, agencies at various levels, such as local communities, non-governmental organizations in particular countries as well as inter-country levels, governments as well as inter-governmental agencies, e.g. the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, seem to be more aware of trafficking in women and taking preliminary, although as yet ineffectual, steps to control such trafficking. While trafficked girls and women are put to a variety of uses, e.g. at home as "wife" and domestic servant, helper at sweatshops and restaurants, illegal drug exporters, trafficking for forced prostitution has received much more emphasis both in the literature and in intervention programs. A widely shared belief is that women who are trafficked are, among others, sexually abused, even outside the domain of prostitution. While these concerns are to be welcomed, it is not entirely unlikely that at least some of these concerns arise out of the scare of HIV and its high communicability, rather than trafficking as such. In any case, many of these initiatives, particularly those taken by state and interstate organs, disproportionately rely on *immediate and direct* juridical and policing

and "awareness" measures rather than intervening in the specific features of the political, economic, educational, etc systems which make women an object of trafficking (also see Human Rights Watch 1995). The government of Nepal, for example, has officially restricted the migration of women to specific countries, regardless of the purpose of migration.

It must, however, be noted that it makes little sense to view trafficking as an *exclusively* cross-border, i.e. interstate, phenomenon. Trafficking is a regular routine *within* all of the South Asian countries. Thus, while interstate trafficking has received much of the attention, possibly because of its international implications, whether more women are trafficked inside or outside a given country and whether trafficked women suffer more inside their own country or outside remains an unanswered question.

Complicit and Forced Trafficking

Trafficking connotes involuntariness. A feeling is evoked that *all* persons being trafficked are either being duped into, forced, overpowered or kidnapped against their will (e.g. by means of physical threats, use of drugs, false marriage), or are otherwise totally unaware, like objects and commodities, that they are being trafficked. While such is indeed the case for a large, although indeterminate, proportion of those being trafficked, it is *doubtful* if all, or even an overwhelming proportion, of those being trafficked are similarly situated. At the psychological level, it would be more reasonable to assume that a significant proportion, rather than being forced and overpowered, may be "willing to be trafficked". Prolonged shortages of resources necessary for livelihood, short-term but severe contingencies, as well as seasonal scarcities may *force them to become complicit* to trafficking. (It is the specific character of this structural forcing that deserves far more academic and policy attention.) A larger proportion may be "complicit" to being trafficked as such but remain totally in the dark on the specific "end uses" they will be put to, e.g. they may be informed that they will "enjoy a better life", be "employed" at "high wage rates" but may not be aware that they will be forced into prostitution. They might even be pre-informed that the "work" might be "difficult" and even demeaning. Members of their family may also find themselves in a similar situation. Published instances of trafficking of children, boys, girls, men and women by very close relatives would indicate that *under extremely unfavorable structural conditions*, trafficking may take on a variety of *shades* between being forced and

overpowered on the one hand and complicity on the other. Clearly, considerably *different* sets of political, economic, legal, administrative, etc. *interventions* will be required at the interstate, state, community, familial and individual level in order to address trafficking of particular shades.

Trafficking and Prostitution

As noted, trafficking takes place for various purposes. As already noted, it is not only girls and women who are trafficked but also the elderly, men, boys and infants. (Indeed, we have come to "accept" even human organs, e.g. blood, liver, being trafficked.) Trafficking can also take place in disparate historical contexts, e.g. trafficking of slave labor in earlier periods. In more recent periods, trafficking of semi-slave, bondage, labor is prevalent in agriculture, crafts, manufacturing, etc. Those "manpower agencies" who illegally export labor from South Asia to developed and semi-developed countries, e.g. in East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Europe, North America, can be taken as examples. Nor do all "manpower agencies" specialise in across-border export of labor. There are many less known and unregistered "manpower agencies" which traffic persons *within* a given country, primarily from the rural to the urban areas.

The recent, "modern" regime of trafficking is also saliently directed toward girls and women. Part of this trafficking is certainly directed toward the prostitution industry. (Pradhan 1997) Not all trafficking of girls and women, however, is directed towards prostitution. Girls and women are trafficked for a variety of purposes. The legal and illegal opening of the menial and unskilled sector to international workers in developed and semi-developed countries in the last three decades has opened the floodgates to trafficking in girls and women. Even semi-skilled and highly skilled women are being trafficked from South Asia to such regions and countries. The trafficking of industrial workers, nurses, information technology workers are examples.

The Supply Side

The trafficking process can be analyzed in various ways. One way to cut through it is to reduce the trafficking process into an event characterized by specific conditions of supply and demand. This mode of analysis, as hinted, has the effect of de-emphasizing history; but it also has the effect of pointing

out the key links in the trafficking chain which can, in turn, generate insights for controlling it.

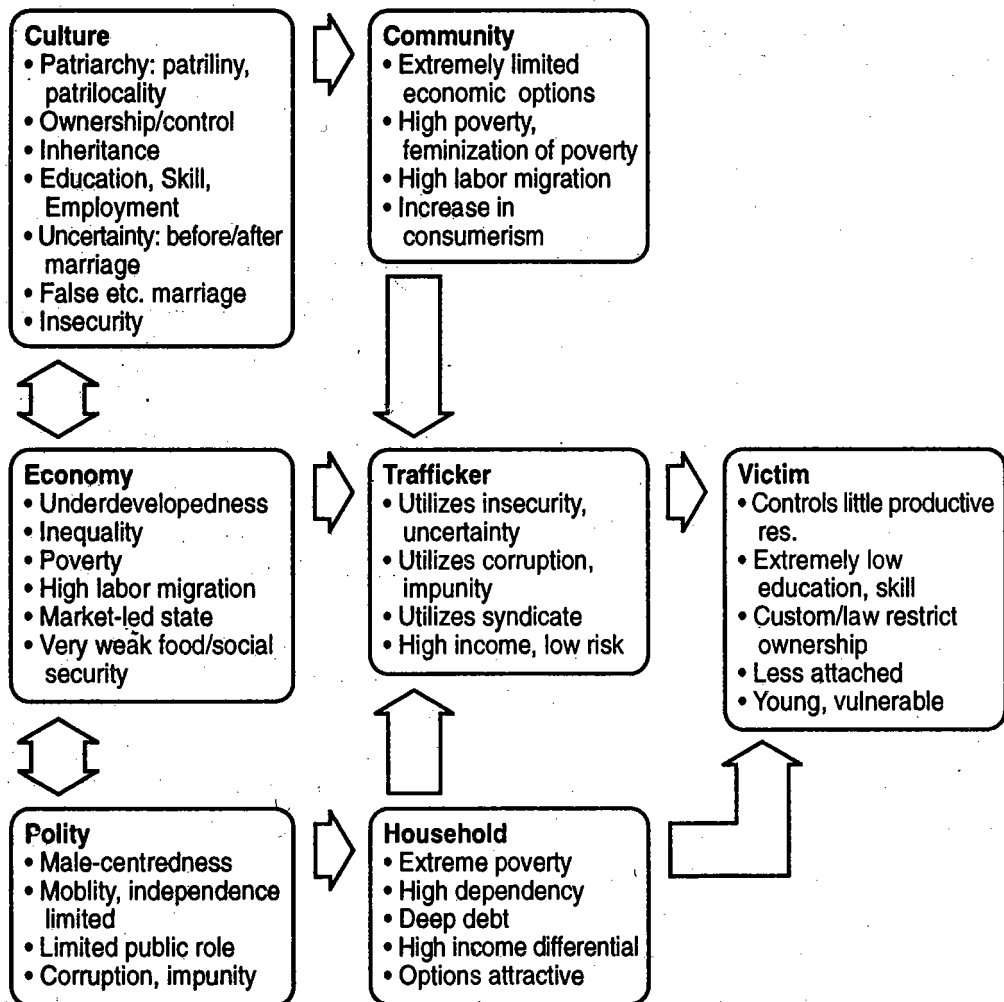
The supply and the demand sides can be analyzed in several ways. One such way is to map the major features of the political, economic and cultural spheres and of the social spaces specific actors inhabit within this larger structure. In the remainder of this discussion paper I propose to sketch one "model" each of the supply and demand sides of trafficking in women in South Asia.

The supply side model comprises the victim, her family, community, the trafficker and the larger social structure. The latter has been elaborated here as specific political, economic and cultural attributes of the "supplying state and society" (see Diagram 1).

The culture of the supplying state and society is patriarchal. Patriliney and patrilocality are the key features of such a system. That resources are *inherited* as well as *controlled patrilineally*, in turn, is the defining characteristic of patriliney. Girls and women, in such culture, personally experience and vicariously internalize in the present, as well as visualize a future, in which their access to productive natural resources, education, skill, remunerative employment, etc. remain extremely uncertain at the best and severely limited at the worst. In particular, absence of *inheritance rights to productive resources, agricultural land in particular*, renders their future highly uncertain. Marriage is nearly the only recourse that can be utilized for accessing such resources. But because the relative resourcefulness of the future groom's household is necessarily uncertain, the level of predictability of their future course of life remains extremely low. False marriage, for example, is often a response to this uncertainty regarding the future course of life. Under patriliney, nor are daughters socialized for pursuing an independent livelihood. Patrilocality, which is often associated with patriliney, disattaches, to various degrees, married women from their family of birth. It also generates, for a significant proportion of women, considerable physical and social hardship and insecurity, including in relation to matrimony. Uncertainty and insecurity, in turn, *create conditions* which, among others, encourage trafficking.

The economy of supplying state, region and society is highly underdeveloped as well as in constant interaction with larger and more developed "demand" economies. The economy is also characterized by a high degree of inequality. In addition, the economy comprises a large proportion of extremely resource and income poor households which can

Diagram 1: The Supply-Side Factors and Interrelationships



barely earn their livelihood through engaging in uncertain, low-wage, "informal" labor for others, most prominently in non-local and distant communities. Labour migration, including seasonal labor migration to towns and cities in neighboring countries, is a longstanding routine. Such a longstanding migratory pattern gives a certain historical *legitimacy* to the process of trafficking. In addition, the state has no social effective food and other social security system and fully relies on the market system.

The polity of the supplying state, region and society is male centered. Women's physical mobility is sharply circumscribed. Assertion of independence by women is highly restricted. The public sphere of participation by women, in particular, is highly restricted. Public decision-making is predominantly a male domain. This holds true from the local to the

state levels. Few women are empowered to seek access to electoral and other public offices; even fewer get actually elected or appointed. The polity of the supplying state is also characterized by a high level of *impunity* (that the guilty go unpunished) and *corruption*, right from the administrative to civil security to the judicial organs.

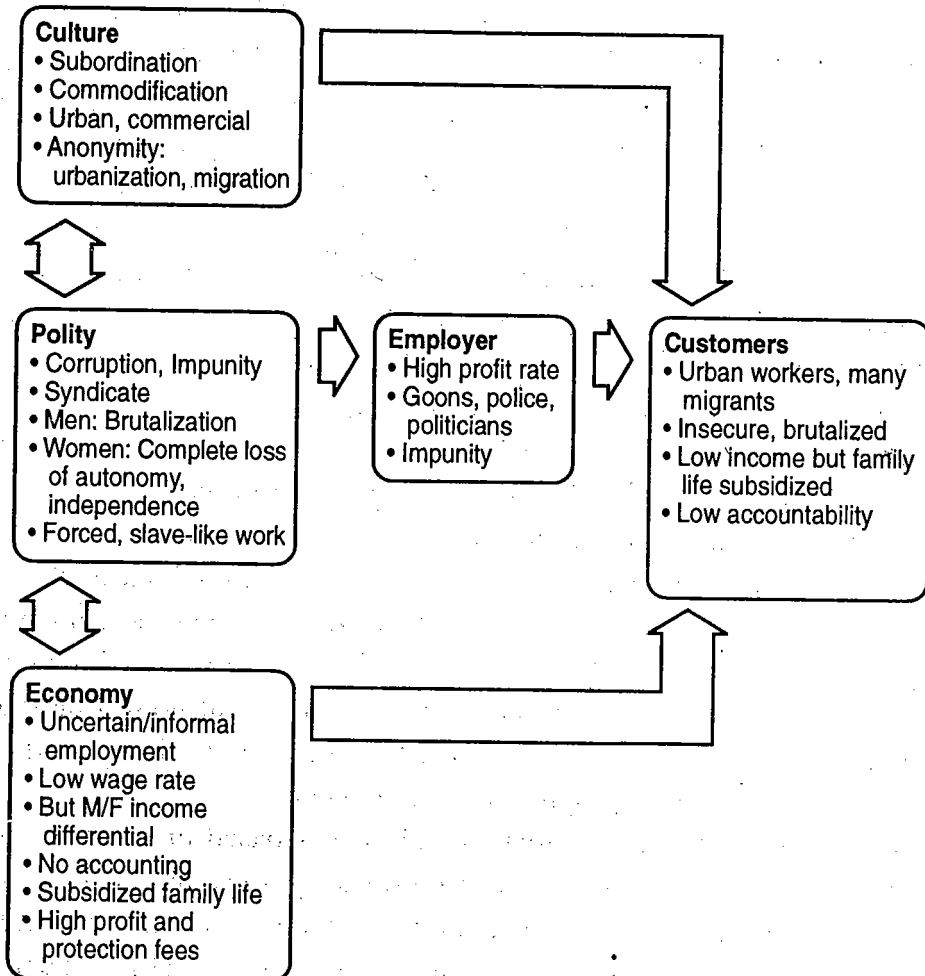
These characteristics of the larger structures shape the victim, her household and community and the trafficker in particular ways. The trafficker effectively and efficiently *utilizes* all these features in the crafting of his/her trade. Patriliney; patrilocality; girls' and women's uncertainty regarding the future, as well as their insecurity, absence of inheritance rights, resourcelessness, poverty and dependence is well internalized within the trafficker's strategic plan. In addition, political, legal and administrative setting of impunity and the high corruptibility of the officers drastically *lower the risks* involved in trafficking. Impunity and corruptibility also support a trafficker syndicate to thrive which, in turn, further empowers and protects an individual trafficker.

The community where the victim resides has limited economic options, particularly for girls and women, especially under conditions of widespread and rather intense resource and income poverty. It has had a fairly longstanding routine of seasonal and/or permanent labor migration and/or trade with larger market centers in and outside of the country. It is also a space where *consumerism* is making initial-to-considerable inroads.

The victim's household has very little resources to work upon and secure a stable livelihood. It is probably also at a specific stage of its lifecycle where there are a number of dependents, whether siblings, one's own children, parents or the sick. The household is probably deep in debt such that it cannot be paid back even with two or three future crops. Traffickers, in turn, promise much high rates of income than locally available. This is sometimes corroborated through examples of local individuals or households who had earlier taken hold of "similar opportunities".

The victim herself probably owns little productive resources. Customs and laws debar her from such ownership and even access. As such, she is, in a salient manner, unattached to the local society. She also probably had a very brief schooling, if at all. She cannot find ways to market the skill she might have. She is relatively young as well, sometimes in the pre-teens and the early teens, in which case she could not have had the opportunity to go beyond the primary grades.

Diagram 2: Demand-Side Factors and Interrelationships



The Demand Side

The literature on trafficking, it must be noted, is highly unbalanced: The demand side, compared to the supply side, *remains to be explored*. This note, in keeping with the limited literature that does exist (e.g. Human Rights Watch 1995, Wichterich 2000) sketches the demand side as comprising, once again, of the larger political, economic and cultural structure, in addition to the "employer" and the "customer".

The culture of demand for trafficking is based, among others, on female subordination as well as the commodification of women, most prominently of their bodies. While women's subordination has a long history, the commodification of women's bodies is much more recent. It is based on the capitalist organization of production and growth, industrialization,

commercialization and urbanization which, at least in the early stages, often *bypass* women as legitimate and legal migrants, laborers, wage earners, traders etc. (Wichterich 2000: 24). These specific characteristics, in turn, empower certain categories of men to commodify women's bodies.

The economy of the demand is comprised of the uncertain nature of employment (for many, especially seasonal and temporary unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers), low wage rate and *pervasive insecurity* which discourage the worker's wife/family from joining the male laborer there (also see Schuler 1992: 122). On the other hand, the absence of the wife and other members of the family frees the male worker from having to account for wage and other income as well as personal expenditures. The *anonymity* of the industrial-commercial urban area and the rise of male ghettos (both in place of work and localities of residence) contribute to women's trafficking there. That other members of the family back home keep the household relatively intact by working on the family farm, raising of livestock, wage labor, petty trade, etc. also frees the male worker to keep the demand for trafficking alive. The economy of demand is also kept alive by a high rate of profit for the traffickers, the "madams" and high scales of protection money for the security staff, local goon squads, the police and other government officials as well as politicians in the areas of demand.

If the polity of the supply area (see above) is based on restrictions on women's autonomy, participation, decision-making roles, physical mobility, etc., the polity in the demand areas takes these to a *new height*. Here, at least at the early stage of their "careers", women remain as virtual prisoners who are rarely allowed to venture beyond the confines of their place of work. The place of work also serves as the living quarters, thus at one emphasizing the *inseparability* of their physical body and their work as well as the forced nature of their work. The polity of the demand area, beyond the "consuming" location of trafficking, occupies a theatre of an illegal and unholy relationships and operations constructed out of a powerful *nexus* among the employer, the local goons, the police, government officials and politicians who wallow in the protection money and work to further raise the demand for trafficking.

The employer, as the head of the "enterprise", manages the workplace and residence of the "workers" and the relationship with the customers. The employer also mediates with the trafficker and with the local "protectors". In addition, because the employer himself/herself and the workplace are also targets of various anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution forces, s/he seeks to

neutralize such forces through the use of the "*protectors*". "Connection" to the local police and politicians, cemented through the protection money, come handy in the fight against the anti-trafficking forces. Often, the victim's body is also utilized to procure protection and to ensure the security and continuation of the "enterprise".

The "customers" are primarily the urban workers, many of them seasonal or temporary migrants to the town. Most have undergone through bouts of the insecurity of remaining intermittently unemployed and underemployed, of isolation from home, kinship and friendship circles, and the *brutality* of unskilled or semi-skilled work and mechanical work routines. During periods when they are employed, however, these men do earn some income. This income is highly insufficient to maintain a family life at the location of work. But because they do not have to provide an account of the income and because the subsistence economy back home *subsidizes* family life, they enjoy a certain level of freedom regarding the disposal of the earned wage income. It is part of this income that is utilized to command access to the body of a woman. Such access is also utilized as a compensating mechanism for the brutality of unemployment as well as work.

Conclusion

Trafficking in girls and women has to be seen as an outcome of the *interaction* of patriarchy (especially in relation to its patrilineal and patrilocal features) with uneven development. The underdeveloped but market-dominant economy, which is characterized by impoverishment and consumerism on the one hand and expanding urbanization, industrialization on the other. It has also to be seen as a correlate of the absent or extremely weak status of women in relation to *inheritance rights and the general resourcelessness*, including in relation to education, skill, employability, financial capital. It has also to be seen as an outcome of a state and bureaucratic apparatus which is *weak*, and which is systematically *subverted* by its operatives for achieving personal gain (rather than for meeting systemic objectives).

Some of the processes described above are entrenched. Some others are becoming *stronger*. In this context, therefore, there is no easy path to controlling trafficking. *Cultural and legal openings* for women's access to property rights, inheritance rights in particular would go some way in controlling trafficking. Initiatives to make women resourceful, e.g. through

access to good-quality education, skill, employment, financial capital, etc. would be a great help. Measures which *breakdown* the regime of bureaucratic impunity would be very helpful as well. These, in turn, would demand *organized action* by conscientious legislators, women's associations and groups as well as more encompassing citizens' groups within and among countries.

Note

This paper was earlier presented to the Second SAARC People's Forum on Livelihood, Migration and Trafficking held in Kathmandu on December 18, 2001. I thank the participants for their information and comments. I also thank my husband Chaitanya Mishra for editing this paper.

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A QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PERINATAL CARE PRACTICES IN MAKWANPUR DISTRICT, NEPAL

**Suresh Tamang, Natasha Mesko, Bhim P. Shrestha,
David Osrin, Madan K. Manandhar, Hilary Standing,
Dharma S. Manandhar, Jyoti R. Shrestha,
Anthony M. de L. Costello**

Introduction

Perinatal mortality remains high throughout south Asia. Deaths in the perinatal period are intimately linked to the health of the mother and her newborn. Despite their public health importance interventions to address perinatal deaths have tended to focus upon managing complications and service provision. There is, however, a wealth of health-seeking behaviour literature documenting that access alone does not increase health service utilisation. A combination of socio-economic and cultural factors contribute to seeking and receiving health care (Hotchkiss 2001:44) (Devkota 1984:11) (Erickson 1995:11) (Justice 1983:96) (Reissland and Burghart 1989:17) (Thapa 1996:871). With the majority of births in south Asia taking place at home, it is here that illness is recognised as such, and here that preventative measures to avoid illness are practised. An appreciation of care practices and health-seeking behaviour for the population at risk is essential to define the thrust of health education, so that care providers respond appropriately when a problem arises.

Background

We are presently conducting a study on the impact of a community-based participatory intervention to improve essential newborn care (ENC). The study is a cluster randomised controlled trial involving 12 pairs of Village

Development Committees (VDCs) in Makwanpur District, Nepal¹. The study has three major areas of activity:

1. The intervention: this is a participatory intervention based on a model used in Bolivia (Howard-Grabman n.d:105). A VDC Facilitator is placed in each intervention VDC with a brief to work with women's groups in an action learning process to address problems in pregnancy and care of the newborn infant. The VDC Facilitator is a local woman who attempts to broker change in care practices. 12 VDCs will receive the intervention over three years. 12 matched VDCs will serve as controls during this period, after which they will receive the intervention in a form that will have been modified on the basis of the findings of the initial study.
2. Health service strengthening: this is carried out across the entire district in co-operation with His Majesty's Government of Nepal District health services. It comprises audit, training of personnel and supply of essential equipment and medications for care of the newborn infant. The health service strengthening team are also involved in the technical training of programme staff.
3. Surveillance: in the 24 study VDCs, a cohort of married women of reproductive age (15-49 years) have been enumerated and are followed prospectively every month, to identify pregnancies and determine the outcomes of births.

The aim of the overall programme is to bring about sustainable improvement in the care of mothers and their newborn infants, an improvement that should benefit morbidity and mortality. Improvements in care would ideally take place in the home, within the lay referral network and within the health service system. It is towards the first of these that the facilitation team is working.

Objectives

The first phase of the programme involved community entry and a period of qualitative data collection. To design an effective community intervention targeted at improving perinatal and neonatal outcome, current perinatal care practices, problems and health seeking behaviour need to be understood and located within the social context. Perinatal problems and health seeking behaviour have been documented elsewhere. This part of the study aims to

document the language used for perinatal health and current practices during normal pregnancy, birth and post-partum.

Table 1: Characteristics of study site

Characteristics	
<i>Demographic</i>	(n)
Number of VDCs	24
Population	169 776
Sex ratio*	103.7
<i>Socio-economic</i>	
Household primary occupation	(%)
Agriculture	86.35
Waged labour	6.96
Salaried/government	3.96
Small business	2.72
Household appliance score	(%)
0 = none of the appliances listed below	53.03
1 = wall clock and/or bicycle and/or iron	31.05
2 = hand tractor and/or sewing machine and/or cassette player and/or fan and/or radio and/or camera	7.21
3 = bus/truck and/or motorcycle and/or tv and/or motor tractor and/or fridge	8.71
Religion of household	(%)
Hindu	43.74
Buddhist	55.03
Muslim	0.02
Christian	1.13
Other	0.07

*number of male births per 100 female births

Methods

Setting: Makwanpur District occupies 2426 sq km and lies to the south of Kathmandu in the Central Region, Narayani Zone. It has a population of 395 889, the vast majority of whom are employed in agriculture. Topographically, Makwanpur includes both hill (*pahaad*) and plains (*terai*) areas. The district centre is Hetauda, an expanding town with good road connections and reasonably stable electricity and telephone provision. The level of adult literacy is about 44% (Nepal Research Associates 1999:338). The ethnic composition of the district is mixed: among at least 15 ethnic identities, the largest group are Tamang, a Tibeto-Burman, predominantly Buddhist group (46%), followed by Brahmin and Chhetri groups of Indo-Aryan origin (25%) (Table 2). A 24-bed District Hospital, four Primary Health Care Centres and 40 Health Posts or Sub-Health Posts serve the district. There are approximately 64 deliveries in the hospital per month and facilities for blood transfusion but not for caesarian section. 95% of deliveries in Makwanpur occur at home.

Table 2: Ethnicity of study site

Ethnic groups	Percentage
Tamang	56.52
Brahmin	12.73
Chhetri	10.19
Newar	3.77
Magar	5.71
Praja	1.89
Gharti	0.35
Majhi	0.83
Kami	3.28
Pariyar	0.86
Sarki	0.61
Sanyasi	0.24
Danuwar	1.40
Gurung	0.66
Thakuri	0.29
Other	0.69

Study Design: Focus group discussions were used to collect general information on perinatal terminology and care practices during the puerperium (Table 3). One supervisor facilitated and the other took notes. During the perinatal terminology focus groups, a technique called "freelisting" was used to initiate discussion. Informants are asked to list the names of things which compose a category, or domain of cultural knowledge (Fleisher and Harrington 1998:69). In our case, informants were asked to list the names of things they associate with pregnancy, birth and newborn care. After listing, cards showing pictures of different maternal and neonatal problems were discussed.

Table 3: Focus group discussions used in the study

Subject of Focus group Discussion	Objectives	Methodology
Perinatal language and terminology	To gather general information on the language used for perinatal health.	Focus group discussions with mothers using picture cards.
Normal perinatal care practices	To gather general information on current practices during normal pregnancy, birth and post-partum.	Focus group discussions with mothers using pictorial time lines

Care practice focus group discussions used pictorial time-lines as a tool to mark the stages of early pregnancy, later pregnancy, birth and post-partum. Facilitators drew the pictures themselves. A time-line was used to understand the sequential flow of perinatal events, as a 'prop' for facilitators and a focus of discussion for participants.

Site Selection: Two intervention VDCs were selected as study sites. The VDCs varied in topography and demography. At each study site focus groups were purposively sampled to include women of the five predominant ethnic groups and scheduled castes.

Permission to conduct the study was granted by each VDC chairperson and informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants. There were no refusals to participate in the study.

Data Collection: A total of 51 focus groups were carried out from May to June 2000. Of these focus groups, 24 discussions were about perinatal terminology and 27 about perinatal care practices. Team members collected data after a one-week period of extensive practical training. All activities were designed and supervised by the Principal Investigators and all methodologies were pre-tested in the office and in the field. Data were recorded both by note-taking and by tape-recording, for which permission was given in all cases. Each team member also maintained a diary in which she recorded her personal observations and informal conversations.

Data Analysis: Raw data were given specific reference codes. A random sample of raw data was translated into English by an independent third party. The data were broken into units for analysis and each unit was categorised. Patterns and processes which emerged from the data were sorted into themes.

The perinatal terminology data were used to develop a dictionary of terms for the VDC facilitators and interviewers working in the study sites. The findings were subsequently used to inform the design of the surveillance system and to refine the process of intervention in the larger randomised control trial.

Results

In our two study sites and across the ethnic groups, care practices during pregnancy, birth and after birth were surprisingly consistent. The following paragraphs present a summary of the information gathered.

Pregnancy

Being pregnant and having children contribute in large part to a woman's identity in rural Nepal. The importance of reproduction contributes ironically to a sense of pregnancy as normality, which permeates all activities in perinatal period – eating, working and preparing for birth.

Women in our study area are aware of the need to eat nutritious foods during pregnancy, yet a strong economic theme overrode this need. As one Tamang woman lamented: "rich people can eat fruit, but we can't. We can

only eat what comes from the fields". The availability of food is further complicated by intrahousehold allocation, cultural beliefs and practices during pregnancy, lactation and menstruation. Much is written about the "black box" of intrahousehold food distribution and the multiplicity of factors that guide the hierarchical distribution at meal times (Thapa, Chongsuvivatwong et al. 2000:421) (Gittelsohn and Thapa 1997:65). For pregnant women, food consumption is guided further by an interwoven set of beliefs and rules which include the way in which food can become polluted, food classification systems and local explanatory models of illness, as well as normative distribution patterns favouring certain household members. One of the food classifications common in our study was hot-cold. This classification appears to be particularly important during pregnancy and is intimately linked to pregnancy being considered as a "hot state", a common belief throughout south Asia (Goodburn, Rukhsana et al. 1995:54) (Nichter 1996:56). An increase in heat as pregnancy progresses is considered natural and aids birth, but excessive heat is dangerous. Miscarriage is commonly attributed to overheating in the body. White gourd and honey are foods which induce heating and if eaten are thought to cause harm, even spontaneous abortion².

Foods can also be classified according to their taste: sweet, salty, sour and spicy. Sour, bitter foods are craved by pregnant women. A woman who is seen eating lots of lemons is thought to be pregnant. Lemons are a cold food and so are suitable to eat during this time.

Yam, yam leaf shoots and allopathic medicine were all mentioned as being prohibited during pregnancy. Some pregnant women used the restriction of allopathic medicine as a reason not to visit the Health Post. However, there was a general consensus that if a health professional prescribed medicine it could be taken. Herbal preparations made at home or given by the Traditional Healer can be consumed. Vitamin supplements were not classified as medicine and their unpopularity was guided by different beliefs about the "strength" of foods. Some foods are considered as "strengthening" and some as "weakening." Vitamins are "strengthening" and will make the unborn child grow big and strong and result in a difficult birth³.

The fear of prolonged or obstructed labour is common among women in Makwanpur. There exists a sense that working hard during pregnancy will result in a smaller baby and an easier birth (Panter-Brick 1989:217). However, the reality of the village situation clearly dictates working levels, as one Chhetri woman describes: "it is true that some women like to work hard so that their birth will be easy, but if there is no-one in the house you have to

do all the work yourself". It is interesting that the concept of "eating down" was absent here. Food availability is already curtailed by economics and cultural beliefs, and women in Makwanpur work hard and tie a cloth (*patuka*) tightly around their waists so that their babies will not grow large.

Women work until the first signs of labour begin, which accords with the normality of pregnancy (March 1994:10). They are shy about birth and fear that wider knowledge of their state would bring shame on their husbands' households (Bennett 1978:17). Polluting situations such as menstruation, pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period are associated with the most shame, and a woman's behaviour is socially regulated at these times. During pregnancy she should not travel very far; she should not step over the plough or the rope used to tie animals. Breaking these rules has serious consequences: for example, stepping over a plough will prolong labour. If a mother sees a dead body her child will be born with the umbilical cord around its neck. If she visits a place of worship during pregnancy the Gods will become angry and say: "I have already given you the baby, why are you coming again?", and her baby will be born disabled. A pregnant woman in the family also has implications for other household members: her husband must not kill any birds or animals, as he will have sinned.

Shyness and shame are further complicated by the fear of attracting evil spirits during the perinatal period. Women and newborn infants are particularly susceptible to certain kinds of spirits, spirits who are often the souls of childless women, women who died in childbirth or stillborn children. The souls become ghosts which taunt women and infants, particularly during the periods in which their own trauma arose (Manandhar 2000:25) (Blanchet 1984:59). For this reason, the Traditional Healer usually performs a ceremony to appease the souls of these women and children after their death. An expectant mother must also take care not to anger neighbours or relatives as they could become embittered and cast a spell, killing her unborn child.

Pregnancy, then, is characterised by vulnerability. Restrictions on food, behaviour and movement are all in place to protect the expectant mother's fragility. Shyness, shame and the "sense of normality" are intimately linked by a fear of blame. Problems during delivery and the puerperium are often explained in relation to events that occurred (or did not occur) during pregnancy. Likewise, many of the proscriptions during pregnancy are intended to ward off later untold events, leaving mothers in a situation where any perinatal complication could be linked to her transgression or non-

transgression of a social norm and hence her fear of blame (Goodburn, Rukhsana et al. 1995:76).

Birth

Preparation for birth is limited. Chickens, ghee, oil and spices may be bought and stored, to a degree that the household can afford. But economics alone does not prevent preparation: in an environment characterised by high infant mortality and the malevolence of ghosts and witches, superstition about preparing for birth prevails. As one Praja woman laments: "nothing is prepared as the baby might die." Nowadays the situation is changing. Women rarely use a sickle to cut the umbilical cord, they tend to buy a new blade instead. The use of the safe home delivery kit is, however, limited. When asked directly about a delivery kit, a Newar woman replied: "we heard about these things on the radio, but we haven't ever seen them." The supply and availability of safe home delivery kits continue to be a nationwide problem in Nepal (Levitt 1993:51) (Manandhar 1999:9).

Most women gave birth inside the house, although this did depend on the time of day. Tamang women spoke of giving birth inside if it is dark and outside if daylight. A Chhetri woman reiterated this: "sometimes we give birth in the maize field; it really depends on the situation". The place of birth tends to guide attendance. Those women who gave birth outside the house were invariably alone and consequently received a lower level of care. If births are attended, experienced, elder female relatives or close neighbours are most likely to be present. These women are the primary care providers for the mother. Pregnancy's "hot state" is observed during labour. If labour is long, delivery is induced with hot things, being near a fire, a warm oil massage and giving the mother hot drinks.

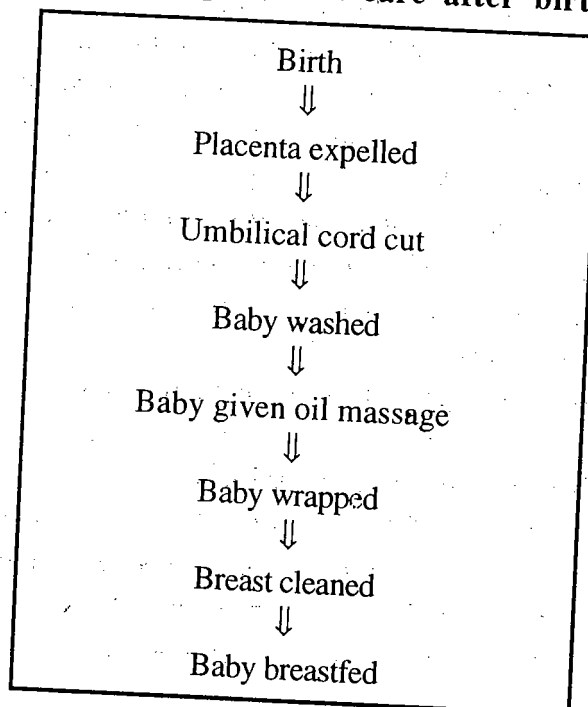
Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) are rarely called to attend births. It seems that in Makwanpur there is not a traditional role for a birth attendant. In other areas of Nepal a person is needed to cut the umbilical cord and this person is often a kind of TBA (Levitt 1993:75) (Manandhar 1999:11). However, in our study area, not one woman spoke of the need to call a specific person to cut the cord. Government trained TBAs are available in the community but tend to be called only in emergency situations.

After birth

A pregnant woman's vulnerability to harm increases as the postpartum period unfolds and is reflected in the choice of resting place. As an elder Magar

woman said: "the place is important, so she will not be touched and is protected from the wind." A postpartum mother (*sutkeri*) is usually kept in a corner, separated from the rest of the house by a semicircle of stones or a woven mat placed upright. Her seclusion is characterised by pollution and vulnerability. The mother is polluted and should not be touched by others, although the baby can be held. Sometimes she has to cook her own food and wash her own plates. Often she is not allowed to touch water. To protect the mother and her newborn baby from evil spirits, a sickle or fishing net can be placed by her side and the room should be filled with smoke. Although secluded, there was a strong consensus that the mother should not be left alone. She should remain secluded with her newborn until the naming and cleansing ceremony of *Nwaran*. This period of seclusion also functions as a rare opportunity for the mother to rest. When talking about the period after birth, many people recited the following proverb to us: "*birāmi uthera tangrinchha, sutkeri sutera tangrinchha*." Which roughly translates as, a sick person will recover by getting up, but a postpartum mother (*sutkeri*) will recover by resting.

Table 4: Sequence of care after birth



The sequence of care for a newborn baby is shown in Table 4. The umbilical cord is only cut after the placenta has been expelled; some mothers

cut the cord only after the baby has cried. The cord is tied and sometimes "milked," before cutting with a boiled or unboiled blade, a knife or sickle. The cord can be wrapped around a piece of wood or rested on a coin to aid cutting. Mustard or fenugreek oil is usually applied to the umbilical stump. Turmeric mixed with oil is only applied if there is excessive bleeding or pus. After the cord has been cut the period of no-touching begins (Blanchet 1984:87) (Levitt 1993:82).

The placenta is often referred to as the newborn infant's friend (*saati*) and should be treated accordingly (Karlsson 1998:22) (Manandhar 1999:31) (Manandhar 2000:43). It should be wrapped in a leaf plate, plastic bag or placed in an old broken clay pot and buried: the level of respect differs from place to place. A small number of Newar women described an intricate ceremony in which the mother-in-law or sister-in-law take the placenta, some incense and small lamps to a special place with a big stone. In contradiction, some Magar women spoke of just throwing the placenta into the river. There were a number of reasons given for burying the placenta. The most obvious being that it is dirty and animals must not eat it. More potent is the influence the placenta has over the newborn infant's health and future. If ants eat the placenta or if mud touches its surface the baby will become sick. When buried, if the cord stump is not standing upright away from the placenta the baby will cry and cry. If the placenta is buried far from the house, the child will stay away in later life or another baby will not be conceived for a long time.

A little taste of honey, ghee, oil or sugar is often given to the baby before the first breastfeed. There were a number of reasons for this practice. A baby's words or life will be sweet, or the first taste of breastmilk will be sweet. Others gave more practical reasons, such as the need to keep the baby's mouth wet, an aid to suckling and a means of dislodging dirt or mucus in the baby's throat.

Colostrum is in general fed to babies. The first milk expressed from the breast is considered dirty, so a little is squeezed out before every feed. As a Damai woman said: "even if we are working in the fields, we must keep a sickle with us and throw a little milk away before feeding". There are other reasons for expressing a little milk before each feed, apart from it being dirty. A Brahmin woman told us that this "unusable" milk, if not thrown away, would make the breast become hard. Others said that feeding this milk would make the baby sick. The practice of discarding the first milk of every feed appears to be common throughout Nepal (Manandhar 1999:27).

Just as pregnancy and birth are characterised as a “hot state”, after birth the mother and newborn infant become cold and efforts must be made to keep them warm⁴. The mother wears a headscarf and is given “warming” foods such as caraway (*jwāno*) soup. “Cold” foods such as black dhal must be avoided as they will cause sickness.

Table 5: Description of ceremonies performed for the infant

Ceremony	Description
Naming and cleansing ceremony (<i>nwaran</i>)	This ceremony is performed between three and eleven days after birth. Sometimes it is performed more than once. The ceremony for a daughter is often earlier than for a son. The house is cleaned or replastered with cow dung and mud. Cow's urine is sprinkled around the house. Usually, a priest blesses the baby, gives a name and a birth certificate (<i>chino</i>). The name is not spoken to others. Holy string may be tied around the baby's waist and wrist: “if we do such things no-one will be greedy [jealous] of the baby”. Light is important so that the infant's future may be bright: ‘the baby can be shown to the sun’ ⁵ . Usually, after this ceremony the mother's domestic work begins and the no-touching rule disappears.
Rice feeding ceremony (<i>pasni</i>)	Usually at five months for a daughter and six months for a son. Egg, fish and meat are brought and rice is cooked. The child is fed with a coin or by hand and should taste a little of all of the food that has been prepared. Relatives and those who were present at the birth are invited and bring gifts.

The *Nwaran* ceremony is performed between three and eleven days after birth (Table 5). The day on which the ceremony is held varies according to ethnic group, clan and geographical location. There seems to be a modern trend of preferring a ceremony as soon after birth as possible. Housework usually then begins for the mother, but agricultural work is delayed until approximately a month later. Mothers are encouraged to take their babies to their maternal houses (*māiti*) for an extended period of recuperation. Starting

domestic and agricultural work and visits to her *maiti* are all determined by the nature and size of the household. As a Tamang lady said: "if there is help in your own house you can stay at your *maiti* for one to two months".

Discussion and Conclusions

Although normal practices have been shown to be similar, we must not assume that beliefs, which guide practice, are the same for all ethnic groups. Differences in practice are often only revealed during crisis, when something other than the norm occurs. Other reports describe a degree of variation in degrees of female autonomy across ethnicity, variation in shyness and shame, variation in interpretation of what constitutes a "problem", and variation in beliefs which uphold decisions (UNICEF 1998:35) (Manandhar 2000:13).

We have shown that the normality of pregnancy influences eating and working habits in rural Makwanpur. Yet there are common fears which influence behaviour. A fear of spirits and witches results in a number of social restrictions. A fear of prolonged labour and big babies upholds working levels and vitamin supplements are discarded. Fear is also intimately linked to shame, shyness and blame, and in turn to a woman's position within the household.

We were often surprised by mothers' awareness of the need to eat more, work less during pregnancy and prepare for birth. But their knowledge often did not result in practice. The ability (or lack of it) to practise is upheld by different structures of society, hierarchy and social norms. A pregnant woman who ate more and worked less would attract attention to herself and contradict the pervasive sense of "normality" which characterises pregnancy. Perhaps messages about care during pregnancy need to be directed at a different audience – those with the authority to change awareness into practice.

Care after birth is governed by themes of seclusion, pollution and vulnerability. Restrictions on movement and an emphasis on rest mean that a postpartum mother enjoys a rare period of recuperation. Breastfeeding practices were exemplary: only a taste of prelacteal, feeding colostrum, early and exclusive breastfeeding (Pradhan HB 1999:20) (UNICEF Nepal 1997:10) (Nepal Nutrition Intervention Project Sarlahi 1999:33) (Paneru 1981:43). However, neonatal mortality remains high in rural Nepal and warrants a closer examination of care practices. Pollution and cleanliness is an area that needs more focus. Cord cutting practices - a clean blade or a boiled blade? Washing hands before cutting? A clean delivery place or just a corner with some straw?

Sundried cloths or old rags? Yet a newborn baby should be bathed and can be touched. Is the pollution associated more with the mother than the baby? Unfortunately, bathing the infant, although hygienic, increases the chance of the baby becoming cold, especially during the winter in a mountainous climate. There already exists a strong need to keep the mother and baby warm. This need for warmth should be emphasised from the moment the baby is born. This leads to another area of observation. In this paper we have not explored what happens if the placenta is not expelled immediately after birth, a situation which is common in multiparous women. In this situation, what happens to the sequence of care? Is the newborn left unwrapped and the cord uncut? Considering the reverence shown towards the placenta, the focus may be on getting the placenta out rather than wrapping the baby. However, we did not explore practices during times of emergency, and this is an area which could reveal much more about behaviour. Due to the vulnerable nature of the postpartum period, it is an almost exclusively female domain. The primary care providers tend to be close female relatives (UNICEF 1996:77), and it might be that interventions should focus on women and elder female relatives.

Notes

1. Permission to conduct the randomised control trial was provided by His Majesty's Government of Nepal: Ministry of Health, District Development Committee and District Health services and the Nepal Research Council.
2. The same restrictions are mentioned in completely different districts of Nepal (Levitt 1993).
3. A study in south India (Nichter M 1996) suggested that pregnant women preferred vitamin solutions to tablets, as it was thought that the latter could not be digested. If taken on a regular basis during pregnancy the stomach would fill up and leave little room for the fetus.
4. The need for warmth after birth is a common theme throughout south Asia (Blanchet 1984).
5. The sun (*Surya*) is a male deity and is often worshipped as a symbol of purity, so it is pertinent that a baby should be shown to the sun during *Nwaran* a "naming" and "cleansing" ceremony.

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SIDDHICHARAN SHRESTHA (1913-1992) IN NEALESE PERSPECTIVE

Jayaraj Acharya

Background

There is a misconception that the Nepali language, known as *Khas Kurā* in earlier times, was forced upon the Newar speaking population of the Kathmandu valley, and other linguistic groups in the mountains and the plains particularly after the Gorkha Conquest of the Kathmandu valley kingdoms in 1768-1769. However, much before 1768, Pratap Malla, (1641-1674) the king of Kantipur (Kathmandu) had inscribed in Nepali that he had made Ranipokhari in memory of his son in 790 (1670 A.D.). Apparently, Nepali had become a *lingua franca* among the hill communities outside the Kathmandu valley much before Nepal's unification by Prithvi Narayan Shah and his descendants. Pratap Malla's inscription indicates that it was also used in the Kathmandu valley to some extent probably by the communities living in the outskirts of the urban centres. Such a spread of Nepali language had given a sense of common identity to the peoples of the mountains who were otherwise divided into small outlying principalities called *bāisis* and *chaubisis*.

Another misconception prevalent in Nepal especially among the scholars studying various aspects of Nepalese society is that Nepali is the language of the Brahman and Chhetri castes alone and that it is the Khas Brahman and Chhetri writers who have played an exclusive role in the development of modern Nepali literature. In fact, however, other linguistic and ethnic groups, particularly the Tibeto-Burman language speakers, have written extensively in Nepali and contributed almost equally to the development of its literature. Sundarananda Bada (ca. 1783-1843), a Newar poet from the Kathmandu valley, had translated the *Adhyatma Ramayana* into Nepali (prose) around 1832 before the "pioneer poet" Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-1868) had translated it from Sanskrit into Nepali (verse), around the 1850s. The very

first poem available in the Nepali language, *Prithvinarayan*, was written by Suvananda Das, who is suspected to be a Newar poet from Lalitpur in the Kathmandu valley (Sambhav 1981:82-83).

Non-native Nepali Writers

The non-native writers of Nepali have been contributing significantly to the development of its literature as have the native speakers from the very beginning. This trend has been more pronounced in later periods, reflecting the growing strength of Nepalese identity based on the social and literary feelings expressed through the Nepali language. Besides the hill Brahmans and Chhetris, other prominent writers of Nepali include Newars, Rais, Limbus, Tamangs, Thakalis and the various caste groups from the plains of Nepal and from Darjeeling district of West Bengal (India). The following long list of the non-native writers of Nepali intends only to indicate that in a rather short history of Nepali literature their contribution has been as great as that of the native speakers.

A few better-known modern Nepali writers whose mother tongue was probably other than Nepali were Riddhi Bahadur Malla (1898-1968), Paras Mani Pradhan (1898-1986), Baikuntha Prasad Lakoul (b. 1907), Satya Mohan Joshi (b. 1913), Kedar Man "Vyathi" (1914-1998), Bhawani Bhikshu (1914-1981), Hridaya Chandra Singh Pradhan (1915-1960), Krishna Bhakta Shrestha (1915-1982), Ratna Dhvaj Joshi (1916-1987), Daman Raj Tuladhar (1916-1991), Ali Miyan (b. 1918) and Shiva Kumar Rai (1919).

Those who were born in the 1920s and contributed significantly to the growth of Nepali literature are Okiuyama Gwynn (b. 1920), Hari Shrestha (b. 1921), Govinda Bahadur Malla "Gothale" (b. 1922), Lain Singh Bangdel (1924-2002), Bijaya Malla (1925-1999), Basu Pasa (b. 1925), Krishna Chandra Singh Pradhan (b. 1925), Birendra Subba (b. 1927), Keshav Lal Karmacharya (1928-1990), Indra Bahadur Rai (b. 1928), Kaji Man Kandangwa (b. 1929) and Kavindra Man Singh (b. 1929).

Prominent among those who were born in the 1930s are Dhuswan Saymi (b. 1932), Pasang Goparma (b. 1934), Man Bahadur Gurung (b. 1934), Dhruva Krishna Deep (b. 1934), Raj Narayan Pradhan (b. 1935), Shanta Shrestha (b. 1935), Bhupi Sherchan (1936-1989), Buddha Kumar Moktan (b. 1936), Bam Prasad Shrestha (b. 1936), Madan Mohan Mishra (b. 1936), Upendra Shrestha (b. 1936), Basu Shashi (1937-1991), Devichandra

Shrestha (b. 1937), Parijat (1937-1993), Yugeshwar Verma (b. 1937), Kumar Pradhan (b. 1937), Bairagi Kainla (b. 1939) and Prem Thulung (b. 1939).

Those who were born in the 1940s and contributed equally to the development of Nepali literature are Krishna Bhakta Shrestha (b. 1940), Dwarika Shrestha (b.1940), Guman Singh Chamling (b. 1941.), Peter J. Karthak (b. 1941), Kumar Bahadur Joshi (b. 1941), Tulasi Diwas (b. 1941), Prithvi Sherchan (b. 1941), Ram Dayal Rakesh (b. 1942), Parashu Pradhan (b. 1943), Prem Sherpa Biroki (b. 1943), Banira Giri (b. 1946) Tej Prakash Shrestha (b. 1946), Shailendra "Sakar" (b. 1947), Man Bahadur Mukhiya (b. 1947), Krishna Bhushan Bala (b. 1947), Bhagirathi Shrestha (b. 1948), Prem Man Dangol (b. 1948) and Mohan Rai "Dukhun" (b. 1949).

After the political change of 1950 the list of such writers becomes much longer. A brief indicative list includes Madan Rai (b. 1950), Pavan Chamling (b. 1950), Shailendra K. Singh (b. 1950), Ramesh Shrestha (b. 1950), Shankar Kumar Shrestha (b. 1951), Rajesh Bantawa (b. 1951), Ashesh Malla (1954), Biyogi Budhathoki (b. 1954) Avinash Shrestha (b. 1955), Shantikumari Rai (b. 1956), Shankar Subba Fago (b. 1956), Bishwa Bimohan Shrestha (b. 1956), Bijaya Bajimaya (b. 1957), Sarubhakta Shrestha (b. 1957), Anita Tuladhar (b. 1959), Pramod Pradhan (b. 1959), Krishna Pradhan (b. 1959), Bhupal Rai (b. 1960), Ishwar Kumar Shrestha (b. 1960), Kumar Tamang "Yatru" (b. 1962), Ramesh Shrestha (b. 1968) and Momila Joshi (b. 1968).

It is notable that the non-native writers of Nepali literature come from both inside and outside Nepal, especially from Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Sikkim in India. For many writers, writing in Nepali seems to have become so natural now that it is almost unthinkable that they could have written in any other language.

Siddhicharan Shrestha in Nepalese Perspective

Siddhicharan Shrestha (1913-1992) comes from this tradition of non-native speakers of the Nepali language, but he stands out as one of its most important poets. Working in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s – the golden period in Nepali literature called "Sharada-kal" (the Sharada magazine period), – he wrote in both Nepali and Newar, but his contribution to Nepali literature was highly acclaimed from early on. Suryabikram Gewali, a scholar, historian and literary critic, wrote an article on Lakshmi Prasad Devkota (1909-1959) and Siddhicharan Shrestha (1912-1992). This article published in the 1930s

(reproduced in this volume in English) entitled "Two Stars in Nepal's Literary Sky" (Nepali *Sahityakashaka Dui Tara*) indicated how important Siddhicharan Shrestha was as a poet. Three years younger than Devkota, Shrestha was a romantic poet, focusing his poetic mind mainly on nature and human being, like his older peer.

The year 1951 was remarkable in Nepal's history as it witnessed a revolution overthrowing the century-old Rana rule (1846-1951). This revolution was to change not only the political system in Nepal, but every aspect of Nepalese society and culture including education and literature. This change in Nepal did not come all of a sudden. India's independence struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1930s and 1940s had an impact on the educated segment of Nepalese society, although education itself was tightly restricted by the Rana rulers. Both Devkota and Shrestha have written poems reflecting this situation in the country.

Siddhicharan's poetry of the 1940s and 1950s is, therefore, worth studying as it reflects the hopes and frustrations of a medieval society in transition towards modernity. It was a period when Nepal went through the birth pangs of a new social order. The birth, however, was not without complications and hindrances. This period was characterized by confusion and chaos in Nepalese society. Accordingly, three distinct attitudes or trends are discernible in Nepalese poetry of the time: (1) traditional, (2) mixed, and (3) modern or romantic.

Some writers, such as Lekhanath Paudyal (1885-1966), remained heavily influenced by Sanskrit literary tradition in every aspect of their works. They were probably not very comfortable with the change in society. Lekhnath's *Satya-Kali Samvad* (Conversation between Satya and Kali) is full of nostalgia of the golden past (*satya yuga*). As we move on to Balkrishna Sama (1903-1981), we find him drawing upon both the Sanskrit and English literary tradition, particularly in his dramas. Although Devkota drew also heavily upon Sanskrit in his works such as his epic *Shakuntal*, one of his very first works *Muna Madan* (1936) broke away sharply from the tradition both in terms of its form and content.

In Siddhicharan Shrestha, the dose of romanticism becomes much heavier. Seeing the plight of the people under the Rana rule, he advocated for a drastic change in society, to the point of suggesting a national political revolution to overthrow the Ranas. So the Rana rulers sentenced Shrestha to jail for 18 years for writing a poem in Newar in which he said "there will be no peace without a revolution" (*Kranti bina thana juimakhu swaccha shanti*).

It is a post-modernist tendency among literary critics to look for anti-colonial elements in the writings of Nepalese and Indian authors during the period before India's independence in 1947 and after it. However, since Nepal was never actually colonized, there was hardly any such element except in Lekhanath's Satya-Kali Samvad. Rather than criticized the British colonialists, he actually praised them for their role in introducing modern science and technology to the Indian subcontinent. The romantics such as Devkota and Shrestha, however, did question the indigenous Rana family dictatorship as against the foreign rule.

Siddhicharan Shrestha's Poetry

Like those of Devkota, the main characteristics of Siddhicharan Shrestha are indignation against poverty as in *Timro baasita paisa chhaina* (Your Father has No Money, Son, 1952); the wrong aspects of the social tradition such as the untouchability of a section of human society, as indicated in his poems *Chyamini* (1951) and *Achut* (*The Untouchable*, 1955); call for a revolution against political and economic exploitation by the Rana rulers, as in many poems such as *Sankat* (*Crisis*, 1945), *kag* (*The Crow*, 1946), *Yugako Urdi* (*Orders of Time*, 1948); and disillusionment over the people's unfulfilled expectations from the 1951 revolution as in the poem *Ba aaunubhaeko chhaina* (*Father Has Not Come Home*, 1952). Parts of these poems are reproduced in this article with English translations by various authors. Except in cases where the credit is acknowledged, the translation, (or modification/improvement of others) is done by the present author.

1. *Timro baasitapaisa chhaina* (1952)

(*Your Father has No Money, Son*)

In this poem, as in another one, i. e., *Ba aaunubhaeko chhaina* (Father has not come home, #8 below), also written in 1952 the poet expresses disappointment over the fact that Nepalese people remain economically poor, and that there is no prospect of freedom from this grinding poverty. "Father has not come home" implies that democracy had not come to Nepal as yet, "Father" here symbolizes democracy, that is freedom without economic prosperity

Mind you, my son you will have none –
Delicious food and beautiful dress

And the privilege to walk with pride,
Holding books in a bundle tight
Human you are, but better you were a dog –
Your father has no money, son!

Whatever wages I get, my son,
Toiling, moiling all day long,
Are not enough to feed us full.
Nothing useful can be done
Your father has no money, son!

Go and use your delicate hands,
Earn a few paisa if you can.
For your mother and father
Droop, droop before your time
Your father has no money, son!

Grazing buffaloes, cows and sheep,
Wandering on the banks and fields –
Read all the disarray
In this book of Nepalese life –
Your father has no money, son!

Schooling's gate is closed to you
To enter through to intelligence,
Knowledge varied and novel sense
Pure and full of consciousness --
Your father has no money, son!
(Trans. by Karmacharya, 1998)

2. *Chyamini* (1951)

Those professional castes who clean the toilets and streets in Kathmandu are called *Chyame* and *Podey*, and are regarded as untouchables. *Chyamini* is a woman belonging to the *Chyame* caste. The poet sees a beautiful *Chyamini* and as he becomes attracted to her, he becomes also aware of the unjust custom in the society which makes her untouchable.

Proud youth, gorgeous beauty,
Burning bright, this Chyamini.
When the heart-violin is playing
and pouring out streams of the song,
it is as if something is scratching,
or something has gone wrong.

When a tired traveler
finds a peaceful and easy shelter,
and is about to enter into the inn.
It's like the door that shuts off
saying "Oh, No: not here."

This is a fleshy weapon
That can dispel the darkness.
But it cannot fit in my heart-sheath
unless its callousness is scraped off.

The custom is crooked, the rule fake.
She has brought the Fate's order in paper
that is tied to the string of her blouse;
Go, get it, open it, and read it.
Proud youth, gorgeous beauty,
Burning bright, this Chyamini.

3. *Achut (The Untouchable, 1955)*

In this poem, the poet is attacking the same evil in society. He is speaking on behalf of God, who is rejecting the offerings from those who have outcaste their own fellow beings.

What is this you have brought me,
untouched by your brothers and sisters?
Take it back, I do not want such things,
you cannot worship while hating yourselves,
you may not enter my temple
if you shut its door to others

Go away, oh sinners,
go away fools and savages,
your offerings I reject.
Do not bow down at my feet,
my body is burning, burning.

The waters you bring are defiled,
far worse than puss and mucus.
If you truly wish to worship,
bring before me the man
whose rights you've usurped through all ages,
touch first his feet against whom you have sinned,
him you have called untouchable.

Only then may you come to my temple,
only then are you blessed as men,
only then will you cease being thorns
preventing our nation's progress,
only then will you be straight.
(Trans. by Hutt, 1991:61-62).

4. *Sankat (The Crisis, 1945)*

In this poem written five years before the collapse of Rana rule, the poet is speaking as a revolutionary young man, committed to overthrowing the unjust regime. He is ready to fight against all odds, and is prepared even to die. This kind of revolutionary fever is a special characteristic of Siddhicharan Shrestha.

Now that you have reached mid ocean
You must not retreat in fear.
The storm may rage – let it do so,
You must not lose your nerve.
Drown or die – what choice is there?
Is this all that you fear?
Millions die and millions drown
To maintain the way of the world.

Enough of a life that is full of tears—
Let me team to die with a smile.
Let me be able to kiss with warm lips
The rope I'll be hanged by.
Paying no heed to the hurdle of tears
Of sons, daughters, mother and wife,
Let me be able to offer my breath
In the fire of patriotic love.

Listen, its Crisis who is calling,
"I am Crisis, your beloved own.
Since your birth I have been with you;
Why feel offended now?
Yes, of course, he was my companion;
A support of life he was too.
Long ago Happiness went away,
Leaving me far behind.
(Trans. By Karmacharya, 1998:23).

5. *Kag (The Crow, 1946)*

The crow is regarded as a messenger of Fate in Hindu society. When it crows in front of a house, it is supposed to be giving a good or bad message depending on its repose to people's order. If it obeys what the people say after its crowing, it means a good omen. If it does not obey what the people say it is a bad omen. In the following poem, the poet is asking the crow if it has brought the message of the end to the Rana rule.

Crow, what news do you bring?
Please tell me your tidings.
Sitting on the wall across the yard,
Tell me please, what you have brought.
Today it is so bad.
Tell me of tomorrow.
O clever bird in the sky!

Shall I pass all my days like this?
Or, shall I get some respite some day?
Will the burden of my mind be removed,

And shall I be fortunate one day or not?
Will pleasure embrace me?
Will it love me?
O black shrewd bird, please tell me.

It's within the human capacity
to bear the pain of mind.
It's among the gifts of the dream
the hunger for prosperity is satisfied.
So shall I take shelter with you now
putting the gifts of my dream
in the platter of humanity?

This frustration and this hopelessness
I will erase it, or tear it apart
Dipping my songs in immortality,
I will take a new life, that is glorious
and I'll come to you, O brother crow, wait.

7. *Yugako Urdu (Orders of Time, 1948)*

Again, in this poem written just one year before the end of the Rana rule (1846-1951), the poet is writing about the "clarion call of the new age", that is dawning slowly upon the Nepalese land. It looked very likely that the Rana rule was going to collapse any time, after the British rule in India ended in 1947. According to the poet, the youth has to be ready for braving the heavy odds, and win the battle against the Rana regime even at the cost of his own life.

Troubles befall a human being
Not a stony thing
A hailstorm lashes the flowers first
In the garden green
The broader the chest a person has
The greater the blow to him.
Bullets were fired on Gandhi only
Not any other being.

The submarine fire chooses the sea,
Not a ditch or a stream;
Troubles have nothing to savor
On things the size of a gnat.
What charm, my friend, do young girls find
Among the little boys?
Will those who are under troubles pressed
Have a fitting chest?

Troubles shine in the name of those
Who face the same to death;
A girl in love passes her days
Weaving memories lost.
Man that you are, rise up you must –
The crisis you must face;
A man becomes a genuine man
If the orders of time he obeys.
(*Trans. by Karmacharya, 1998: 34*).

8. *Ba aaunubhaeko chhaina*

(*Father has not come home, 1952*)

In this poem the poet finds that Aama ("Mother" Nepal) is awaiting Father ("Democracy") to arrive. But he also finds that democracy has not come to Nepal yet. So the poet has begun to see the promises broken. The feudal structure of the society remains intact. The lot of the poor people is the same. So the poet laments. In this way, the poetry of Siddhicharan Shrestha and that of the other poets such as Devkota, in the 1950s, describe a similar social condition and people's frustrations as in the 1990s after the restoration of democracy.

The rain is falling, the wind is blowing,
Time has donned her garb of lateness,
the lamps are lit, a meat is cooked.
Mother is crying out,
"Father has not come home."

Times have changed,
The Ranas have sunk,

they say our chains are broken,
but freedom, progress, democracy,
none of these has come.

Mother is crying out,
"Father has not come home.

The sting of our thought,
the thunderbolt of our dreams,
have smashed the skull of darkness,
but a new dawn, a new age, a new day,
none of these has dawned.

Mother is crying out,
"Father has not come home."

(Trans. by Hutt, 1991:62)

Conclusion

Thus, Siddhicharan Shrestha came out straight against the Rana rule, poverty and other social evils associated with it. He wrote mostly in Nepali because it had wider audience including the Ranas themselves. He had a clear message for change. So he wrote in a simple language but with a great deal of symbolism in it.

Siddhicharan Shrestha's works in Nepali are collected in several volumes: *Urvashi* (*Urvashi*, a celestial nymph's name, 1960), *Kopila* (The Bud, 1964), *Mero Pratibimba* (My Reflection, 1964), *Jyanmara Shail* (Killer Mountain, 1982), *Kuhiro ra Gham* (Mist and Sunlight, 1988), *Siddhicharanaka Pratinidhi Kavita* (Siddhicharan's Representative Poems, 1988), *Tiramire Tara* (Twinkling Stars, 1988), *Bachiraheko Awaj* (Living Voice, 1989), *Mangalman* (Mangalman, name of a man, 1992) *Ansu* (Tears, 1993), and *Karagaraka Samjhana* (Memories of the Prison, 1995). *Atmabilauna* (My Cry) is forthcoming.

Siddhicharan Shrestha's works with no mention of dates are: *Junkiri* (Firefly), *Bhimsen Thapa* (The Nepalese Prime Minister who fought a war against the British in 1814-1816, and died a tragic death in 1839), *Balivadha* (The Sacrifice of Bali), *Shabari* (name of a legendary figure), *Rimjhim* (Children's Poems), *Yatra Samsmaran* (A Travelogue), *Yuddha ra Shanti* (War and Peace), and *Kantimati* (name of a Nepalese Queen).

In the Newar language, Siddhicharan Shrestha's main works are *Siswan* (Wax Flower), *Phuswan* (The Last Flowers), *Gwayaswan* (A kind of Red Flower used in Tihar), *Trishna* (Thirst), *Lubhumi* (A Woman from Lubhu), *Muswan* (A Sweet Smelling Flower offered to Macchendra Nath), *Siddhicharanaya Nibandha* (Siddhicharan's Essays), *Narihridya* (The Woman's Heart) *Uttara-Vilapa* (Uttara's Lamentation) and *Ghama* (Preface).

Unfortunately, very few of Siddhicharan Shrestha's works are available in the bookstores. Most of them are out of print. So there is a need for the publication of his complete works in a single volume to facilitate a much more detailed study than the present one, which intends only to give a perspective in brief.

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TRAVEL AS THEATRE IN NEPAL MANDALA

Abhi Subedi

Preview

Travel has played very significant part in the performance art in Nepal mandala. The journey has been both metaphysical and realistic in nature. Travel is one such trope that brings human beings on a par with the movements of the divinities and the weather and calendrical cycles. Nepal mandala is a spatial concept that creates a microcosm for the movement. The administrative meaning of *mandala* is country, and it has also another meaning that derives from the position of the urban space with deities protecting it from different corners outside the town. All the spectacles of a performance are generated by the performers' movements over the space defined by the religio-architectural formation. For example, the journeys are choreographed in advance, in the architectural and landscape engineering patterns that have continued to surprise the viewers even today. The spatio-cultural and the human settlement patterns have continued to form the heritage of ritual travels within the Nepal mandala for millennia. These ritual movements have the physical, intercultural and message orientated dimensions. These performances can be seen in the traditional, ritual and contemporary movements of the performers along the contours within the urban space in the mandala. These different modes of travels have also undergone various processes of assimilation. In this short paper I would like to focus on these various dimensions of travel that have always given shape to the theatrical performance in Nepal mandala.

The spatial theatrical mandala is architecturally designed to facilitate a travel of the people of the countryside to the urban area. Lanes leading to the agricultural land bear the landmarks of temples where the marchers stop in the ritual festivals. The farmers who make movements with gods in many cases pass through the trails, a journey that leads them to the heart of the

urban area. The path for the travel links the countryside with the urban centres. Musical instruments accompany the journeys; flutes, percussion and cymbals dominate the ensemble. Singing is also another form of this musical journey. Study of various festivals can reveal this phenomenon. Here I am only proposing the models to study the semiotics of the festivals and rituals that have the significance of performance based on travel. The performance travels especially those presented during the Indrajatra festivals and the Machendranath chariot processions are choreographed in advance. Interestingly, the chariot processions are sometimes marred by physical skirmishes that take place between the parties in the process of pulling the chariot in Bhaktapur. The details about these festivals can be read or seen as they are practised as part of the living culture of the Newars.

Rituals of Travel and Architectural Space

The ritual and travels are, as we suggested earlier, performed on the streets. We can take examples of these street marches and see their theatricality. I would like to cite what I have written earlier about the nature of the march on the occasion of the *gaijatra* festival (Subedi:2001):

Gaijatra festival or literally, cow festival is a journey to the world of the dead. In this festival death is dramatised through movements, impersonation and imagined and ritualised signs of cultural formation. Colourfully decorated bodies of the persons who take out the procession, the movement of the cow or the bovine incarnation of the human person follow the contours of the journey through the towns, visiting important temples and places of worship.

They beaten tracks-- the lanes and streets form the main choreography of the cow festival performance. People who offer worship, tips and things, or those who look at these processions for the dead standing on the fringe of the street or sitting behind windows are the audience or spectators of this street drama. The story is linear, colours are fixed and the methods of movement more or less similar. What gives dynamism to this performance is the space itself, the cultural terrain that this journey covers and the silent grief of people who say goodbye to this journey and remain behind the doors

swallowing tears. So this street performance carries the invisible grief, tears and soft moaning. In short, *Gaijatra* is the humanisation of grief and the memories of the dead *through performance*.

The travels of gods and humanity are designed in front of the houses that have windows open to the streets. This is called frontality in architectural discussion today. The frontality of a stage is decided by the position of the viewers, who sit behind the windows and watch the performance whether that is a dance or a singing or the procession of a chariot. According to Portoghesi (2000:369-70), frontality of the theatre has its origin in the behaviour of the watchers. He says:

This gradual evolution of meaning clarifies a no less "natural" genesis. In this case, it was a behavioural model before it ever became an architectural one. A crowd spontaneously assembles, "faces", "huddles together" when someone feels the need to express himself with words, gestures or sounds. The way in which the group congregates is either a circle, when the action entails gestures, or a semicircle when it is important to listen to two opposing factions.

Architectural constructs are the expressions of words; this also works as an analogy between theatre and words or texts. Audience who sit prepared for words occupy a space which is architecturally defined. The concept of frontality, as discussed by the famous Italian architect who shows the architectural designs as the emulation of nature's patterns, presents the nature of human behaviour, words, theatrical sense in the architectural pattern that he calls frontality in this case.

The theatricality of the journey is decided by where the people end their journey. The destinations are fixed in the case of the rituals. People choose steps and pavements around the main theatre, *dabus*, courtyards and streets to sit and watch the performance that has travelled down to the place. The congregation of the group takes place when they want to watch their own mirrors presented through the steps of cosmogonic significance. The frontality of the architectural patterns, the houses of gods and the space of interaction between gods and people which is at the root of the cosmogonic drama, gives a shape to the nature of performance of words and movements

as put in Portoghesi's examples. The movement of the people from the country to the urban area has a unique theatrical value. The urban architectural spaces are the theatres for the people who live on farms or in the urban centres. As mentioned by Portoghesi in his book, the architectural patterns follow the patterns of life and living styles. The theatrical spaces of the Kathmandu architectural patterns made by people's performance culture. Architecturally the farmers themselves create architectural spaces for the performances of the theatrical ritual. Referring to such free movement of the people to the frontality of the architecturally designed places of the Kathmandu valley Mary S. Slausser (1998:130) makes a very brilliant observation. She says:

In its simplest, most elemental form, the traditional building style of the Kathmandu Valley, the Newar style, is to be found in the Newar farmhouse. This is, of course, also a "town house," since Newar farmers are town dwellers. A farmhouse, moreover, is no different from the houses of neighbouring artisans (who may also farm). Houses of wealthy merchants or, formerly, the nobility, and palace and monastery quadrangles are only more elaborate versions of the farmhouse. Community buildings and temples also share its basic structure, and even some aspects of design and decoration. But the Newar house is architecturally important in its own right. It is the basic unit of the traditional village and town, and fundamental to their harmony. Some houses, by virtue of a two-century antiquity (and more), are also "historic monuments"; and some, no less than the neighbouring houses of the gods, are masterpieces of the builders' art.

We notice a unique relationship between the frontality of the theatre and spectators' participation. Free movements of the people within and without the frontality of the architectural locations is the main feature of the performance culture in Kathmandu. People greet the marchers who are completely and earnestly undertaking the travel of performance. The travelling performance in Kathmandu is so strong that it has become part of the rhythm of both the nation and the narration. The enactment of narration on space through marches has become the metaphor of modern nation. Therefore by studying an exclusive Newar mode of performance culture, we

can say that the travelling theatre has shaped this bigger Nepal's nation history both culturally and politically. When King Prithvi Narayan Shah of the house of Gorkha and the founder of the bigger Nepal made his final attack on Kathmandu, he chose the day of the Indrajaatra festival. He rode right into the middle of the performance when people were making preparations to take their king Jaya Prakash Malla to a chariot procession, a travel which has been part of the ritual performance. His choice of the performance theatre shows his knowledge about the power of performance and the intensity of people's involvement into the community theatre. Prithvi Narayan Shah walked into the middle of the performance in Kathmandu like a character in a street play in 1766 and fully used the carnivalesque quality of the ritual and performance mood when he rode on the chariot prepared for the King's procession, the protagonist's city travel, and went around the city. As in the performance of a play the character was changed but the stage and the form of performance remained the same.

Street March as Power of Performance

The heritage of travel remains as the central concept of creating rapport with the audience and in most part, that is guided by the spirit of the community in Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur. But after Prithvi Narayan Shah rode on the chariot, the act changed. Kathmandu streets have been used for broader political demonstrations. But the Newar street performance, the carnivalesque mode of demonstration remains at the heart of the modern time street demonstrations. With Kathmandu's shifting demographic structure, the migration of the people to the valley from different parts of the country, as it became the capital city after Prithvi Narayan Shah rode the chariot in the performance, the nature of the street performance has changed. People, who came to the street after the overthrow of the Rana rule in 1950, did project political sense of theatricality. Streets see very many forms of performances of the political nature. According to John Bell (1998:278):

Parades and processions make more complete use of the street as performance site than do stationary street performances. They exploit not only the public nature of such sites and the possibility of reaching an undifferentiated audience which exists on the street, but also the physical length of the street

and the possibilities of movement along, which are in fact the essence of the street's spatial and public character.

The events during the historical procession of the year 2046 B.S. (1990) that brought about the democratic system of government in Nepal did have the element of festivity. As a close witness myself to the street demonstrations, the power of the street that circulated among the people then was contained in the tidings about the movement of the people of the three valley towns. Slogans and news that circulated around were like 'now the demonstrations from Bhakatapur or Patan or Kirtipur has arrived' and so on. The language used by people then was the same as that which is used when a jatra comes to a certain space in the mandala. Reaching became a symbolic victory. When the marchers arrived people poured water, threw flowers from windows for the comfort and welcome of the marchers in the scorching heat of the day, cut onions and gave the marchers to counter the effects of teargas as I personally benefited from one near Ranipokhari during the process of the march in 1990.

The long procession that marched towards the Narayanhiti palace on the deciding day in a quiet manner did impress the King himself who has always been a very important protagonist in the street rituals and marches. He became the audience and the marchers became the performers. Street became the theatre, the Royal Palace became the audience's place and the slogans for political change from non-party system of government to a multiparty system of government became the dramatic text. The rhythmic slogans, marching rhythms and the use of colours did evoke a sense of street theatre. The marches and demonstrations on the streets have a great theatrical value. The big march was a combination of theatre and ritual. The marches did create a new context of performance and enactment of narration. The nationalism evoked by these marches was different from the one evoked by the ritual marches. But the ritual and theatrical modes of the marches in the new context in the Nepal mandala did show the same carnivalesque or ritualistic features as can be seen in every form of street rituals involving marches.

The symbiosis of the marches with the formation of the modern nation's nationalistic and political drama can be seen by examining some interesting events of the recent times, the most revealing of which can be seen in the events that happened during and following the movement for the restoration of democracy in 1990, the main centre of which was the Nepal Mandala. And

naturally as said earlier, the marches did play very significant part in that street drama.

Ironically, people did not much know about the leaders whom they saw for the first time in the open theatre. Ganesh Man Singh, the octogenarian leader, a great freedom fighter from the 40s onwards and also called the 'commander' of the people's movement had been drawing an analogy between the political leaders and the people by using the most famous icon of the theatrical-ritual march in the Nepal Mandala, the procession of Machendra's chariot. Singh who comes from the cultural background of Kathmandu presented this narration of a new form of national movement in one of his speeches to give the ritual assessment of the people's movement, that we can transform into a drama in three scenes. The chariot by analogy is democracy and those who pull the chariot to its destination are the people in this drama and the dog is the leader of the movement. This is the cast. The drama can go like this.

In the first scene when the chariot is static a dog slips underneath and goes to a doggy sleep as usual. In the next scene he wakes up to the hullabaloo and feels a tug; the chariot had already started rolling after people started pulling it. This is the most problematic scene— the scene of greatest conflict. The dog realises its *hubris* in the act but the destiny is powerful that it is unavoidable. The only way open to the doggy is to hold composure and go on fighting against the huge chariot of the universe where gods sit above enjoying all the power. The power structure is vertical and the nature of the drama is cosmogonic. He is a tiny dog, what could he do except rolling on by avoiding being crushed by the wheel. He is an existentialist hero, who suffers from all the *angst*; he is a tragic hero caught between the wheels of destiny. The second act is the real play to interpret which we can use all the great theories of tragedy and the impending catastrophe. The final scene is the scene of *dénouement*. The chariot comes to its destination. It comes to a halt. The dog is bewildered for a moment and can not decide whether to come out from the underground or not, but boldly does come out to his relief that the people are all looking at him with love and excitement that he has come unscathed from underneath, from the underground position.

The fact of the matter was that they too needed the dog because they needed a character that was outside this ritual that they were performing for millennia. They needed a hero, an outsider, and a character who emerged from a limbo. He also symbolised the power of the mighty's mercy. A truly democratic atmosphere prevailed. But as for the dog himself he chooses a

position, let us say the Khulamancha and looks at the chariot, and says to himself, "my god, I never knew that I was so powerful that I could carry such a huge chariot on my back!" But his other mind keeps telling him all along that he in fact has not been carrying the chariot on his back. But he finds the analogy tremendously useful and from the Khulamancha he declares that he has in fact carried the chariot on his back. He repeatedly tells this story to himself until he himself begins to believe it.

The dog was like the political leaders of the 1990 rebellion, including Ganesh Man Singh himself, as he confessed. The leaders' claim was vacuous as that of the dog, who have gone a little too far today. This analogy made by the great leader, a Newar himself, speaks about the relationship between the power of the theatrical march, festivity and this enactment of the nation's narration in the new context in Nepal Mandala.

This subject has become very important in the modern street theatrical discourse. Richard Schechner's interpretation of the event of the 1989 in China is very revealing in this context (p.p. 202):

The struggle in Tiananmen Square before the entrance of the tanks was not between rigid ritual and rebellious theatre, but between two groups of authors (or authorities) each of whom desired to compose the script of China's future and each of whom drew on both theatre and ritual. The students improvised in public, while the officials, as always, rehearsed their options behind closed doors. The students took Tiananmen Square, the centre stage and ritual focus of Chinese history.

The 'ritual focus of history' can degenerate and take ugly turns for reasons of the rulers never choosing to remain nonchalant about the performances on the street. That dramatises the nature of the tension in the performance on the street.

The nature of marches and travels has shaped the Nepali street performances of more theatrical nature. Different forms of plays were performed in the streets of Kathmandu and other towns at different forms. I have discussed about the heritage of street theatre elsewhere in greater detail.

Element of Journey in Modern Theatre

We can see the element of travel and march in the modern Nepali plays also. In them the well-known dramatic stories present travel or movement in

and out of a locus. Balakrishna Sama's play *Mukunda Indira*, a play that is known for its fine theatrical performance and story of a little conservative order, a character named Bhabadev on his way to Calcutta to fetch the protagonist Mukunda who has been studying there and apparently taken to a little free way of life forgetting his virtuous wife Indira back home, looks back at the space, the Nepal Mandala and sings of the glory of the land, the space and its splendour. He portrays the space that he had not left before as a Shangri-La. In his dramatic outpourings Bhabadev admires the geo-architectural forms or the structures that tell about the dramatic settings of both nature and culture. The patriotic fervour is expressed for reasons of the travel that he undertakes out of the mandala.

In yet another play *Ma* the movement out is dramatised. In *Prempinda* the long play that he wrote to show the power of love on people who live surrounded by power and wealth, the journey of the lover forms the important part of the dramatic finale.

Gopal Prasad Rimal's famous woman protagonist Helen in the well-known realistic play *Masan* finally marches out of the space. That last march is the culmination of the drama. Such journeys out of the place have always appealed to the dramatists here. Vijaya Malla, who came from the very well-known family of the Newar of Bhaktapur did express that creative energy through a unique process of dramatisation. I have my personal experience about playing for the first time in his short play *Pattharkokatha* in 1968, the role of the protagonist Raghubir who is one of the characters in *mrityulok* or the world of the dead, who were killed by the Zamindar, who himself joins them all there later. In this surrealistic play movement is portrayed as a performance made with the force of life, but does freeze once they all get into the world of the dead. Malla's play dramatises the Newar cultural narration, the livid experience of mixing life with the myth of the dead that the *Gaijatra* festival so well represents. This march as said earlier is an experience of life itself--a life experience embedded into the dramatic form of death. The street marches therefore have been central in the performance culture of the Mandala.

The young theatre groups like the Sarwanam who came into existence in the year 1986, did use march or travel as the main energy of the street performance; they also emulated the forms of street theatre in India. In *Hamibasanta Khojiraheka chauni* or 'we are in search of spring', the characters make movements on the streets shuffling the crowd to find spring. One other experience is worth mentioning here. When Sunil Pokhrel, a well-

known director of our times was directing my play *Arukaphulka Sapana* or *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, which is an attempt to present the human story behind the Newar culture, he decided to exactly incorporate the street theatrical marching into the presentation because he said that without this element of the street march no such drama would be possible. Then he made the woman protagonist leave the space and travel out of the centre. That struck me as very important element of the march. Then I worked on another full-fledged play about journey itself. Again the location is the Nepal Mandala. This absurd nature of the journey that takes place from the old, aristocratic houses to the freak streets, from home to jungle in which process even guns and antiques begin to travel, is being directed by another director of the younger generation Pushkar Gurung, who is going to play with the very theme of marches, journeys to the freak street and out of the established big homes to insecurities.

Conclusion

I do not want to elaborate this theme of marches and journeys in Nepali theatre any more than by giving some examples. But the main thrust of my survey has been the study of the dynamism of the marches of people on the architecturally choreographed space. The use of the mask according to the French director Jacques Lecoq is made "to make the hands and feet stand out so that gesture becomes symbolic. The play of the head, hands and feet completes the body's expression as it completes the form of the theatrical gesture". In this manner he says, one will be able "to go back to a theatre where one's whole being becomes one with the universe" (Lecoq 1996:141). The use of the mask and mime, dance and music enlarges the time scale and the volume of space to the travel--a mixture of theatricality and ritual. The physical nature of the marches in the urban and rural spaces in the Nepal mandala has history and heritage from the mythical journeys to those of the present times when marches on street signify the new contexts of national and cultural consciousness. The marches in the streets of the Nepal mandala therefore have been the agencies of change in the structure of power in the country. This deeply embedded sense of theatricality therefore shapes both the nature of cultural and political rituals in this country, which shows the power of street and performance, which as discussed by Schecner represents the power of the modern street drama that shapes our destiny today.

Note

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BOOK REVIEW

Powell, Robert. *Himalayan Drawings*. Edited by Michael Oppitz, with contributions from Peter Herbstreuth, Niels Gutschow, Götz Hagmüller, Clare Harris, Heather Stoddard, Charles Ramble, Annegret Nippa and Michael Oppitz. The Völkerkundemuseum der Universität, 2001. 304 pp., 283 colour illustrations, 59 black and white, 1 map. ISBN 3-909105-41-6. Price: Swiss Francs 78.00, approx. US \$ 50.00.

"I don't like catalogues, I don't even like the *word* catalogue" said Dr. Michael (Mark) Oppitz, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Völkerkundemuseum at Zurich University, as he leafed through Robert Powell's *Himalayan Drawings*. And after taking in the 300 pages of this 'retrospective panorama' of Powell's work, I can see why Oppitz might resent the term.

Instead, *Himalayan Drawings* is a total book, a complete meal in published format which edifies the visual senses as much as it does the intellect. The high quality of the photographic reproductions match the intensity of Powell's art, and the full page plates which make up two thirds of the publication have a depth of colour almost indistinguishable from that of Powell's originals drawings. The most prominent feature of Powell's signature style, now frequently seen in the posters adorning restaurants and middle-class homes in Kathmandu, is his unique form of fantastical hyper-realism. On first viewing, many people take his drawings to be doctored photographs, only later realising that the life-like shadows and hairline cracks were created by pen and brush. It is all the more fitting, then, that the printed reproductions of Powell's work which appear in the beautifully-produced *Himalayan Drawings* should be so true to his original works. When studying the House of Tsuk, for example, which graces the dust jacket, one is hard-pressed to remember that this is a photographic replica of a pictorial representation, and not the house itself.

The publication of *Himalayan Drawings* was timed to coincide with the first ever retrospective of Robert Powell's oeuvre. The exhibition, with the same title as the accompanying book, was organised by and housed at the Ethnographic Museum of Zürich University in Switzerland and ran from July 13, 2001 to March 3, 2002. While previous shows of Powell's work, both in Kathmandu where he lives and works, and at the Sackler Gallery in Washington D.C., have focused on specific geographical locations depicted in his art, the *Himalayan Drawings* exhibit was more expansive in its vision. On display were 142 pieces spanning 25 years of Powell's work in the Himalayas (Nepal, India, Pakistan and China), which he had created using a range of different media (watercolour, ink and pencil).

It becomes apparent when reading the book that Powell's admirers are also his patrons, benefactors, clients, and critics. The exhibition was organised by Michael Oppitz, a long-time friend of Powell's, who also edits the publication and contributes one of the longest chapters. The exhibit was opened on July 12, 2001, by Niels Gutschow and Götz Hagmüller, both respected architects and scholars and sometime residents of Nepal, and key figures in Powell's professional life and development as an artist. On reading the captions for the plates (pages 279-296), one can't help noticing that a significant number of the pieces are owned by none other than Michael Oppitz, Götz Hagmüller and Niels Gutschow.

While readers unfamiliar with the lifestyle of expatriates in Nepal between the 1960s and 1990s would be forgiven for finding these overlapping coincidences a little too self-referential, the explanation is really quite simple. As becomes clear from the personal recollections shared within the chapters of *Himalayan Drawings*, the atmosphere of Kathmandu during this era was one of convivial cohabitation, with expatriate scholars, writers, travellers and artists intermingling and working on exciting new projects together. It comes as no surprise to learn, then, that the very same people who commissioned Powell's drawings should be the ones to appreciate them. In his personal *Preface*, Michael Oppitz describes the contributors to the book as a 'well-matched team. Some are old companions of the artist about whom they write. Others have joined the club later' (page 8).

The first chapter is by Peter Herbstreuth, an art critic and curator, who masterfully intertwines excerpts from an interview he conducted with Powell and his own intellectual appreciation of the artist's work. According to Herbstreuth, Powell 'extracts pieces from his real surroundings, reconstructs them and shows the detail on the picture surface' (page 11), a technique

which Herbstreuth himself emulates in his writing. The interview with the artist is fascinating, and Powell comes across as modest and thoughtful. According to Powell, in 'any traditional architecture you see the passage of time. And that is what I found boring about so much modern architecture. There is nothing designed within the building to allow for the effect of time on a structure.' (page 14). With Powell's comment in mind, it is hard to disagree when one looks around the modern skyline of Kathmandu. Later in the interview Powell touches on a central feature of his work to which many commentators call attention: the notable absence of humans. Powell again states:

They [people] distract from the basic image of the building and it becomes too easy. It becomes picturesque with that 'some-locals-in-costume-in-front-of-the-building' type of thing. This is not what I mean to show. (page 16)

The absence of human figures in Powell's work is indeed striking, but perhaps only because the structures he depicts are so clearly shaped by humans. To return for a moment to the dust jacket which bears the House of Tsuk: everything about the painting speaks of human involvement and daily use. The absence of people from this painting comes is quite natural, in fact, since their presence is so palpably felt and acknowledged in the structure itself.

Herbstreuth concludes his chapter with a carefully-worded critique of the clichés that abound in popular Western imaginings of Mustang, representations which are partially fuelled by the exoticising and sensationalist press reports of the region as a land of mystery. While art critics and journalists are quick to conscript Powell's Mustang paintings for their Orientalist imaginings, Herbstreuth makes a persuasive case for reading Powell's art as precisely the opposite: 'Contrary to their ascribed ›mystery‹, Powell's works demonstrate clarity and legibility. He has grasped the architectural culture in precisely constructed pictures' (page 27). For Herbstreuth, then, Powell is an artist who addresses transformation: he creates 'a picture taken from a reality that insists on its verisimilitude, without being veristic' (page 11).

The architect and conservation expert, Niels Gutschow, structures his chapter around the theme of 'imaginary documentation', a phrase coined by Robert Powell to describe his own work. For Gutschow, Powell's 'imaginary

documentation' actually 'crosses the line of the imagination to achieve a narrative quality' (page 32). Gutschow offers a tightly-written overview of architectural documentation, surmising that measured drawing is not truly documentary since 'every line on paper requires a decision' (page 30). He uses this brief discussion as a reflective backdrop onto which he projects Powell's drawings and paintings. Detail is of the essence in Gutschow's presentation, and the reader learns that Powell counted the courses of bricks in the courtyard façade of Kuthu Math in Bhaktapur in order to maintain the correct scale in his drawing. Echoing his earlier comments to Herbstreuth, Powell confides to Gutschow that "traces of decay produce a texture that attracts me", a feature particular apparent in his drawing of the Panauti Agamachen. Furthermore, Gutschow is highly attuned to the technical aspects of Powell's art. He observes that light always enters from the left in Powell's drawings, and that while perspective makes a brief appearance in Powell's earlier work, it only resurfaces many years later in his Mustang collection. Documenting Mustang was clearly an exciting challenge for Powell, and one which encouraged him to experiment more freely with water colours and fine pencil outlines. The contrast between the architectural techniques and styles of urban Newar buildings and the wildness of Mustang is mirrored in Powell's work. After working in the Kathmandu valley for many years, Mustang offered Powell 'something more basic, almost modern architecture' (page 38).

In his chapter entitled *Fact and Fiction*, Götz Hagmüller analyses eleven of Powell's flights of fancy: drawings and paintings which lean rather more heavily towards the 'imaginary' in the 'imaginary documentation' continuum. Hagmüller states at the outset that 'visual documentation of the material aspects of a culture...is never without a degree of subjectivity and imaginary content' (page 43), challenging the misconception that Powell's work can be neatly divided between the super-real on the one hand, and the illusory on the other:

While Bob is certainly a meticulous draughtsman, even his documentary pictures go beyond the reality they depict.
(page 44)

Hagmüller, the Chief architect of the Patan Museum, goes on to narrate a charming anecdote. During the 1995 exhibition of Powell's Mustang paintings held in Patan, visitors from Mustang attending the show asked the

artist where certain structures could be found in their villages. Powell was obliged to reply that some of them existed only in his own mind and 'on paper' (page 44-45).

Clare Harris, a specialist in visual anthropology, concentrates on Powell's images of Ladakh. She takes the reader on a brief historical jaunt through the ages by invoking the imperial draughtsmen who documented places they never actually visited. Harris finds some of Powell's work reminiscent of an 'archaeological excavation in which the artist has used his eye to unearth the significance of each rock and object encompassed by his vision' (page 56). Her insights are compelling, and she concludes that while 'human presence is rarely represented figuratively in Powell's Ladakh pictures...we are presented with the material evidence of thought and action' (page 56). Heather Stoddard's short contribution is an artistic treatise rendered as a personal monologue. The eminent Tibetologist's stream of consciousness is punctuated with observations and insights about Powell's methods and aims:

Each image breathes a quiet unselfconscious respect for the culture it takes as its object; the artist's wonder at the way the people have adapted to their mountains, to the rough and ready materials at hand. (page 63)

Entitled *Art without Artists*, the anthropologist and Tibetologist, Charles Ramble, begins his chapter with an overview of the history of Mustang and a discussion of the difference between so-called 'high' and 'low' culture. Through a careful analysis of Rigsum Gonpo, or Protectors from the Three Buddha-families, pervasive architectural features in both the territory of Mustang and in Powell's depictions of this landscape, Ramble illustrates how anthropologists' preconceptions about meaning and continuity are not always shared by locals. Ramble's chapter is brimming with context: from the environment in which Powell's art may be viewed, to the dusty and harsh reality of daily life in Mustang which contrasts with many foreigners' perceptions of an enchanted land. Some of Ramble's musings are worth citing in full:

The exactitude of the reproduction tricks us into thinking that we should observe them with the same clinical detachment as convention once enjoined on frock-coated visitors to ethnographic museums. And then we remember that, unlike

our grandfathers, we aren't obliged to hide our enjoyment.
(page 74)

Annegret Nippa's chapter offers an intensive examination of a mosque which Powell documented in the spring of 1980. Nippa, Director of the Museum of Ethnography in Dresden, uses her comparative and historical learning to demonstrate that the mosque of Gabral Jaba, located in Swat-Kohistan, is an extraordinary construction with a remarkable heritage. Powell's instinct was spot on when he chose to focus his artistic attention on this mosque which "while not the biggest or most spectacular by any means, did have something very special in its atmosphere, its remote location and its evident non-Islamic details" (page 89). According to Nippa, Powell's images of the structure preserve a secret which has remained hidden from the missionaries: 'Gabral Jaba reminds people of the old days and the old gods' (page 88).

Michael Oppitz's chapter, the final one in the collection, is one of the most rewarding. In this contribution, Oppitz does what he does best, blending detailed ethnographic insight with comparative anthropology, and topping it off with his deep understanding of the visual arts. Oppitz and Powell first collaborated in the 1980s when the anthropologist asked the artist to illustrate a book on the northern Magar populations of Nepal. Oppitz singles out one of Powell's drawings to show how the artist's focus on documentation resulted in the artistic aspects of the drawing being understated. The emphasis lay in its 'auxiliary service to ethnographic explanation. In a sense, the painting was on its way towards mutation into a descriptive chart' (page 92).

However, Oppitz points out that Powell's creations are often images beyond the documentary, which collapse space, cut through solid walls to expose structural features of buildings, or simply capture angles impossible with a camera. In some of Powell's drawings, in fact, the viewer can find back the photo that he should have taken but never actually did. Oppitz punctuates his analysis with pairs of images, usually a photograph of an object accompanied by Powell's rendition of the same, and the author shows how time after time he prefers the artist's interpretation to the photograph. Discussing a *gagri* beer pot, for example, Oppitz concludes that Powell's ink version 'had more material presence than the corresponding photograph' (page 97), a presence which is actually intensified through its decontextualisation. Oppitz again:

Unlike corresponding photographs which cannot but catch everything upon which they are focussed, Bob's drawings are extremely selective, radically omitting anything secondary. They stand alone on the sheet, undisturbed, undistracted, demanding an exclusive and solitary dialogue with the observer, on the isolated ethnographic subject they capture. (p. 99)

After comparing drawings with photos, Oppitz further contrasts Powell's drawings of Kalash material culture from Chitral in Pakistan with the same objects drawn by Uwe Topper in 1962. The profound differences in understanding on the part of the two artists, each of whom perceive patterns of geometric lines in Kalash culture quite differently, re-enforces for Oppitz that writing, seeing and drawing are all 'acts of conceptualisation and interpretation' (p. 100). Engaging with the debate on Powell's representation of people, Oppitz concludes that 'the human body appears in the finished works of Bob Powell only where he attempts to copy (and transform) given pieces of art' (p. 109). And while Powell is primarily a studio artist, Oppitz coins the catchy term 'ethnographic draughtsman' to describe the artist's way of focussing in on images of intrinsic anthropological interest, while, at the same time 'humbly following the rules of likeness' (p. 113).

Oppitz concludes his stimulating chapter by turning to Powell's Mustang oeuvre, which he notes is considerably larger and more colourful than his earlier drawings. Colour is central, argues Oppitz, in understanding how Powell conceptualises Mustang. The artist collected samples of Mustang soil used by local colourists to extract pigment, examples of which are reproduced in the book. We further learn that Powell does not '*paint* white; rather, he *leaves blank*, so that "white" is the white of the paper' (p. 115). Even more than in earlier work, the physical conditions and travel restrictions of Mustang obliged Powell to paint in his studio in Kathmandu. Nevertheless, the photographs that he necessarily took of his objects of study never extend beyond the functional. As Oppitz writes, 'for Powell photography will always be a research tool, an auxiliary activity to his vocation as draughtsman' (p. 117-118). As the reader learns from this wonderful collection, Powell would rather use a careful brush, a precise hand and his fertile imagination to assist him in his imaginary documentation. While some may find Powell's adherence to realism and accurate representation outdated, the artist himself is not unduly concerned: 'In Kathmandu many in the

modern art scene think my work is totally old-fashioned. They are stuck in this 1960's idea of what modern art should be' (page 18). The publication of *Himalayan Drawings* comes a long way in illustrating both how and why Powell works in the way he does, and in so doing provides the reader with a feast for the eyes and mind.

– Mark Turin

Note

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BOOK REVIEW

Hachhethu, Krishna. 2002. *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and People*. 311pp. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point. ISBN: 99933-10-13-1. NRs. 550.00

The book under review, *Party Building in Nepal: Organization, Leadership and People; A Comparative Study of the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)* is based on both archival research and field study. The author critically examines the party building process, especially that of the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) in the post 1990 period following the changes in the parties' goals and activities.

The study concentrates specifically on the post 1990 *Jana Andolan* or Restoration of Democracy period in Nepal, for it was then that the two political parties entered an entirely new phase of party building. It was a time when they underwent a number of distinct transformations "...from illegal organizations to legitimate contenders for political power; from movement or underground organizations to open competitive parties; from cadre based to mass based parties; from a small group of people sharing common interests to heterogeneous organizations consisting of people of diverse interests; and from ideology oriented organizations to power seeking parties." (p. 14)

The book, a result of a field survey of NC and CPN-UML leaders/workers obtained through a structured questionnaire and personal interviews and based on the concept of party building, brings out how these parties organize and work at the central and local levels and explores and analyzes the problems and prospects of party building. Moreover, being a comparative study of the NC and the CPN-UML, Nepal's two main political parties and contenders of power makes it even more interesting. The book also looks into a host of issues like emergence and struggle for leadership, candidacy and elections, relationship between higher and lower level organizations, relations between organizational and elected wings, conflict

generation and crisis management, party-people relations, patronage distribution and a host of other issues.

To contextualize the party building process, the book concentrates mainly on *expansion, system, harmony and dynamism* -four inter-related components- as indicators of party building and expands on how the components interplay in the party building process. It also attempts to find answers that relate to party building of the NC and CPN-UML and why they have relatively been more successful than other political parties in expanding their support bases. Whether they take into consideration the pluralistic characteristic of the Nepali society or not in selecting or electing their respective party leaders, the methods and criteria adopted etc. are also probed into. In the context of competitive politics, which both parties have entered into since 1990, the book also deals with whether they constitute and reconstitute their party organizations according to required structural diversification and functional specialization. Other issues pertaining to party building, as to how vertical relations between higher and lower units of the party is arranged and how horizontal relations between the organizational and elected wings of the party are coordinated also form a crucial part of the book.

However, the Faction and Conflict Management section, a vital part of the study leaves much to be desired, considering the thoroughness of other sections of the volume. As in-party factional conflicts are rife in both the parties since they became contenders in power politics, the publication also seeks answers to moot questions like the mechanisms the respective parties resort to in maintaining unity and cohesion and whether their activities correspond to the party's minimal responsibility of linking people's preferences with the government's policies. It cannot be disputed that today, especially after 1990, both the NC and the CPN-UML are heterogeneous organizations, considering the massive increase in their membership and diversification of support base. Therefore, it is but natural for them to be prone to disintegrative tendencies, thus supporting the theory that the power centric intra-elite conflict is the main factor behind the formation of factional groups at both central and local levels. The vertical split of the CPN-UML thus leading to the creation of the Marxist Leninist Party (ML) some time ago and tremendously weakening the Opposition in the House of Parliament is a case in point.

The NC party on the contrary, prides itself in staying united and tightly knit in spite of all odds and not breaking up though deep reaching political,

personal and professional differences are rife among its leaders. In other words, the NC as a political party has "miraculously" held together and avoided a major split in its rank and file despite its hyperactive power-centric intra-elite working overtime! As the writer contends, it could be that "emotional" "political" and sentimental attachments among the NC troika, Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala, were the binding factors that held the party together and that later after the death of Singh, "...Koirala and Bhattarai rather faced humiliation but saved the party from a break up." (p. 197) This contention however, could hold true for the pre-restoration of democracy days when the NC as a banned political organization was at the dancing end of the stick. It was a time when all members of the trio were alive, when they were united against a common political enemy and when they virtually, by the sheer dint of their personalities, ruled and led the party to victory, overthrew the party less Panchayat regime and restored democracy in the country.

It could well be that in those days, the magic of the troika worked and that B.P. Koirala's idea and confidence behind handing over the party responsibility to these three leaders was basically "... to combine, Singh's radicalism, Bhattarai's efficiency and GP Koirala's dynamism and also to neutralize their demerits- rigidity, lack of political judgment and instability respectively. Since all were founder members of the party, their leadership symbolized the continuity of the NC's long struggle for democracy. The party's rank and file also expressed loyalty to the troika leaders: Singh was hailed as an *Iron man*, Bhattarai as a *Saint* and Koirala as a *Revolutionary*." (p 41)

The troika leaders in their long struggle had gone through thick and thin, trials, tribulations and harsh prison sentences. Thus having remained close comrade in arms for well over fifty years in a bitter struggle to overthrow Rana autocracy and later the party-less Panchayat system to usher in multi party democracy brought them even closer. Their relationship matured over the years and effortlessly reached a soul mate status of sorts. However, the contention can be challenged on grounds that the success of the mass movement and the restoration of democracy in the country in 1990, in dramatic fashion, changed all that. The bickering that ensued among the once solidly united troika over minor policy matters, party functioning, appointment of party members in their respective groups to important posts/positions and one upmanship in the political power game, almost brought about a vertical split in the party's rank and file on two occasions.

The Achilles heel of the NC party has always been that when not in power, it stands solidly united, but the moment it achieves victory, or for that matter gets the people's mandate to form a majority government, the bickering and fierce infighting for the spoils of power begins. Since its very progressive inception in India followed by its halcyon decade in the 1950s as a truly emerging democratic party, its revolutionary rule in Nepal followed by its exiled paroxysms in India, the bickering within the party had already started. In the last decade, with the restoration of democracy in the country followed by the fierce infighting among its leaders, its major founding stalwart, Ganesh Man Singh the *Iron Man* detached himself for all practical purposes from the NC party. He lamented that "...the party, right from 1950-51 with the advent of democracy in the country had fallen victim to the internecine quarrels among the Koirala *bandhus*" -namely Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala and his elder half brother Matrika Prasad Koirala- when they along with their supporters went different ways. Now in his old age, another founding father of the Nepali Congress, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, is counting his disillusioned days having witnessed the vertical split in the NC rank and file brought about by the warring lobbies led by Girija Prasad Koirala and Sher Bahadur Deuba respectively.

Looking back, the 1959 general elections should, in all actuality have initiated a period of political stability in the country considering the overwhelming mandate the NC received. However, instead of accepting the massive trust bestowed on them by the people, senior NC party leaders right from the prime minister sought to marginalize other political parties and their leaders. The arrogance, thus exhibited by Nepal's first elected government, ironically proved a catalytic factor that destabilized the very political system the NC party, along with other political parties, had painfully achieved.

In the latter half of 1960, the BP Koirala government made yet another fatal move of appointing NC party workers as district development officers. The shortsighted decision not only widened the potential for corruption but also helped spread to the local tiers the partisan bickering eating away at the centre. Under such circumstances, coupled with the absence of a readiness to address the potential for instability inherent in party politics, even a genuine quest for modernization would have proved futile. The BP Koirala government's efforts to expand its influence well beyond the political sphere mandated by its election victory set the stage for the Royal takeover.

Some thirty years later, despite having won a comfortable majority in two of the three national elections after 1990, the NC has miserably failed to live

up to the responsibility that comes with popular faith. Because of the politics of power, the name of the game after 1990, Nepal has squandered much of the international goodwill it had generated as a democratizing country. In the midst of all these developments, our politicians forever see imaginary threats to democracy emanating from every conceivable quarter. It is high time the politicians of all parties instead of turning paranoid, admit their failures and shortcomings to properly nurture the multi party dispensation that the people fought, bled and died for.

It is unique and an irony of sorts that the threat to the NC party comes not from the Opposition, but from within -the grieved wing/lobby/camp of the party itself that more or less, also plays the role of the Opposition in the House. This, as a result has not only tremendously weakened democracy in the country and seriously eroded the credentials of the NC party that once prided itself on being synonymous with democracy itself, but has also relegated the role of the real Opposition in the House to that of a passive thumb-twiddling observer.

These developments make it evident that the troika unity was a thing of the past, and when personal and political differences among the trio surfaced after 1990, fanned by the upwardly mobile political aspirants of their respective lobbies/camps for matters of personal gain, the NC's political ball game took a different turn. The chink in the NC armor -denied all along by the troika- became clearly visible. However, whether it was for old time's sake or due to the tacit understanding among the troika leaders, as the writer contends, the NC party remained stubbornly glued together.

However, after the death of Ganesh Man Singh, the chink in the NC armor further widened and the blatant power game within the party reached new heights. The frequent ego clashes between the two remaining legs of the troika, Bhattarai and Koirala, brought about two distinct factions within the Nepali Congress, one led by the latter and the other by Sher Bahadur Deuba, Bhattarai's blue-eyed boy. The factions were of late engrossed in a fierce struggle for the party flag and the election symbol, to prove once and for all which is the "real," "legal" or "authentic" NC party and thus contest the forthcoming polls scheduled for November 13. Though the much controversial verdict of the Election Commission after much delay has gone to the Girija Koirala lobby and has resulted in a vertical split in the NC, with Deuba and his lobby in founding a new party, the infighting however, seems far from over. At the rate both factions are going for each other's jugular and with the CPN-UML in the meanwhile making the proverbial hay while the

sun shines, the country's political stage, come the November polls, seems all set for another bout of power politics.

In this connection, it will also be worth noting that in the past, especially after 1990, the relationship between the NC troika and Indian leaders and politicians of the *Chaksibari* fame, who virtually played midwife to Nepal's democracy, have been stiflingly close. History also bears testimony to the fact that a united NC victory in the general elections resulting in the formation of a NC government at the helms of affairs has always been in the Indian interest. Therefore, the possibility of external pressure in the name of democracy and human rights by regional and international powers on the NC party leadership to kiss and make up once more, cannot be ruled out. The split in the CPN-UML thus resulting in the Marxist Leninist party (ML) before the last elections, wherein the latter came out with a bloodied nose with not even a single seat in the House, could also be an incentive for another of those innumerable patch ups.

Therefore, the logic/argument forwarded by the author behind the "divide" in the CPN-UML ranks and the "unity" of the NC as a single party, especially after 1990, though acceptable on the surface, may however, appear a bit too simplistic when put under the political microscope. In this regard, the post *Jana Andolan* political developments to date -especially, in matters of foreign policy where there has been a clear deviation from the 'yam and boulder' concept judiciously propounded by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the Unifier and founder of modern Nepal is a case in point. Besides, numerous instances of leaders, especially of the NC, dashing off to neighboring India at the slightest pretext, to seek help and advice from their political *gurus* whenever the unity of the party is threatened, also lends strength to the argument that NC party unity is more cosmetic than anything else.

It would therefore, be somewhat naïve on our part to suppose that regional and extra-regional powers -in spite of vested interests- have no hand whatsoever, behind the "divide" or "unity" in the country's main political parties. For a country like Nepal, strategically located as it is between China's soft underbelly (Tibet) and India's heartland (Indo Gangetic Plain), the issue merits deeper study and thorough analysis. It is therefore imperative that an otherwise balanced and objective post *Jana Andolan* study -such as the book under review- also look critically into this very important aspect, so as to provide graphic insight into the faction and conflict management, and leadership component of party building in Nepal.

The book, as mentioned by the author at the start, originated as a Ph.D. dissertation, but the publication as it stands, still reads like one -having been unable to shed the "skin" and "tone" of a doctoral thesis. For a broad readership, this may need serious looking into should there be a second edition to the volume. The book, nevertheless, is a treasure trove, not only for scholars and students of political science, but also for those interested in the history, development, transformation and party building efforts by Nepal's two main political parties, the NC and the CPN UML, especially in the post 1990 period. The publication is significant in that unlike other publications of the post *Jana Andolan* period it is a comprehensive and praiseworthy attempt at studying local organizations of political parties -an area neglected in previous publications.

– Ananda P. Shrestha

BOOK REVIEW

बरूवा, हरेन्द्रबहादुर । शताब्दी पूर्व जापानमा अध्ययन गर्ने अग्रज नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरू। काठमाडौं: मंडला बुक प्वाइन्ट, २०५९ ।

सूर्योदयको देश जापान र बुद्धको जन्मस्थल नेपालका बीच परम्परागत सम्बन्धको पृष्ठभूमिमा नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूको जापान भ्रमण तथा जापानी बौद्ध भिक्षु इकाई कावागुचीको नेपाल भ्रमणको ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व रहेको छ । यी दुई घटना नै नेपाल-जापान प्रत्यक्ष सम्पर्कका सूत्रधार थिए । दुई विशाल छिमेकी राष्ट्रहरू भारत र चीनबीच अवस्थित सानो हिमाली अधिराज्य नेपाल तथा सुदूर पूर्वमा समुद्रपरिवेष्टित टापूहरूको देश जापान भौगोलिक दृष्टिले टाढा रहे पनि सभ्यता, परम्परा, धर्म र संस्कृतिका दृष्टिले निकट रहेका छन् । आधुनिक नेपाल राष्ट्रको आर्थिक विकासको मुख्य सहयोगी राष्ट्र जापानसँगको औपचारिक सम्बन्धको इतिहास त्यति लामो नरहे पनि बुद्ध धर्म र बुद्धको जन्मस्थलका कारण दुई देश बीच भावनात्मक सम्बन्ध प्राचीनकालदेखि नै रहँदै आएको अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ । दुई देश बीच समान राजतन्त्रात्मक परम्परा, अतिथि सत्कारको विशिष्ट र हार्दिकतापूर्ण सामाजिक परम्परा, समान प्रवृत्तिका राजनैतिक उतार चढावहरू र अनुपम प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्यले यी दुई मुलुकलाई निकट ल्याउन थप सघाउ पुऱ्याएको पाइन्छ । यस पृष्ठभूमिमा नेपाल-जापान सम्बन्धको इतिहासमा नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूले सन् १९०२ मा गरेको जापान भ्रमण कोशेढुङ्गो थियो । १९०२ मा जापान अध्ययन गर्न गएका यिनै विद्यार्थीहरूका विविध पक्षमा प्रकाश पार्ने कार्य “शताब्दी पूर्व जापानमा अध्ययन गर्ने अग्रज नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरू” नामक कृतिमा भएको छ । नेपाली, अंग्रेजी र जापानी गरी तीन भाषामा लेखिएको यस पुस्तकका लेखक श्री हरेन्द्रबहादुर वरूवा हुनुहुन्छ ।

श्री वरूवाको यो पुस्तक बौद्धिकतापूर्ण हुनुका साथै खोजपूर्ण एवं जानकारीमूलक पनि रहेको छ । लेखकको प्रमुख उद्देश्य नेपाल-जापान सम्बन्धको प्रमुख कडीको रूपमा रहेको नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूको ऐतिहासिक जापान भ्रमणको सम्बन्धमा प्रकाश पार्नु रहेको प्रतीत हुन्छ । अत्यन्त मेहनत र अध्ययनका साथ यो पुस्तक तयार पारिएको छ । लेखकले आवश्यक सहायक सन्दर्भ सामग्रीहरूका अतिरिक्त मौलिक ऐतिहासिक दस्तावेजहरूसमेतको उपयोग गरेर ग्रन्थलाई तथ्यपूर्ण एवं प्रामाणिक बनाउनु भएको छ । यस प्रकारको उत्कृष्ट एवं खोजमूलक कृतिका निम्ति श्री हरेन्द्र वरूवा धन्यवाद र बधाईका पात्र हुनुहुन्छ । यस कृतिमा निललहर, गोदावरीफूल, हलुवावेद र ठूलो कटुसले नेपाल जापान सम्बन्धको

इतिहासलाई प्रतीकात्मक रूपमा चीरकालसम्म सम्झना दिलाई राख्ने छ भन्ने कुरा प्रकाश पारेको छ किनकि यी फल र फूलका बीउहरू नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूले जापानबाट ल्याई रोपेका थिए । नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूले जापानमा प्राविधिक शिक्षाका साथसाथै जापानी सभ्यता, संस्कृति तथा शिष्टाचारको पनि ज्ञान प्राप्त गर्न अवसर पाएका थिए जुन नेपाली समाजका निम्ति उपयोगी रहेको तथ्य स्पष्ट हुन्छ ।

नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूमा जापानमा प्राप्त ज्ञान, जापानको उन्नति र प्रगतिबाट समान अधिकार तथा आर्थिक प्रगतिसम्बन्धी नयाँ विचार, सोचाई र दृष्टिकोणको बीजाङ्कुरण हुन गयो । यसबाट एकाधिकारवादी राणाशासन विरुद्ध जनमत सृजनामा पनि सघाउ पुऱ्यायो । यस्तै विचारका कारण एकजना विद्यार्थी काठमाडौँबाट आजीवन निस्कासित हुनु परेको थियो । यसर्थ नेपालमा सामाजिक न्याय र समान हक, स्वतन्त्रताको भावना जगाउन जापानको पनि योगदान रहेको थियो भन्ने कुराबारे पनि पुस्तकमा प्रकाश परेको छ । देवशमशेर र चन्द्रशमशेरबीच नेपाली विद्यार्थीलाई जापानमा नै पढ्न पठाउने कारणको सम्बन्धमा आधारभूत भिन्नता थियो । त्यसबेला एशियाली मुलुकहरू आफ्ना विद्यार्थीलाई पढ्न पश्चिमी देशमा पठाउने गर्दथे तर नेपालले चाहिँ किन जापान पठायो भन्ने प्रश्न विचारणीय छ । देवशमशेर एक सामन्ती कृषि समाजको रूपमा रहेको जापानको औद्योगिक राष्ट्रको रूपमा द्रुत रूपान्तरणका कारक तत्वहरूको अध्ययन गरी त्यसलाई नेपालमा पनि अपनाएर मुलुकको विकास गर्न चाहन्थे त्यसैले उनले विद्यार्थीहरूलाई जापान पठाउने योजना बनाएका थिए तर चन्द्रशमशेरले भने पश्चिमी मुलुकको प्रजातन्त्रबाट नेपालीहरू प्रभावित नहुन् भनी पूर्वी मुलुक जापान पठाएका थिए । यसबाट देवको विकासवादी नीति र चन्द्रको अनुदार नीति रहेको कुरालाई प्रष्ट पार्ने यो पुस्तकले सघाउ पुऱ्याएको छ ।

लेखकले व्यक्तिउपर राणा शासकको नियन्त्रण कतिसम्म हुँदो रहेछ भन्ने कुरा एउटा शिक्षक राख्न पनि श्री ३ बाटै अनुमति माग गर्दै विद्यार्थीहरूले श्री ३ लाई पठाएको रिपोर्टको प्रसङ्ग उल्लेख गरेर स्पष्ट पार्नु भएको छ । यसै गरी जापानमा नेपाली विद्यार्थी बसेको घर वेटीकी छोरीले ३० वर्ष पछि दीर्घ नरसिंहलाई पठाएको पत्रको पनि लेखकले उल्लेख गर्नु भएको छ । यसबाट जापानीहरूले नेपालीहरूप्रति कति श्रद्धा र प्रेम दर्शाएका रहेछन् भन्ने कुरा बुझ्न मद्दत पुग्दछ । यो दुवै मुलुकका जनताको भावानात्मक सम्बन्धको प्रतीक हो । देवशमशेर जापानबाट अत्यन्त प्रभावित थिए । यसका विभिन्न कारण रहेको कुरा स्वयं लेखकले उल्लेख गर्नु भएको छ । खासगरी जापानले कृषि तथा उद्योगको क्षेत्रमा गरेको अभूतपूर्व प्रगति, जापान नै सवैधानिक शासन स्थापना हुने पहिलो एशियाली मुलुक हुनु यसका मुख्य कारण थिए । यसैले आफू निर्वासित भई भारतमा बसीरहेको बेला पनि उनले जापानमा नेपालको दूत भै जाने मनसाय प्रकट गरेको कुरा इतिहासबाट जानकारी मिल्दछ । त्यस्तै देवशमशेरको जापानमा नेपाली विद्यार्थी पढ्न पठाउने सम्पूर्ण योजना बारे विभिन्न स्रोतबाट जानकारी मिल्दछ । उनले यस सम्बन्धमा जापान सरकारसँग पत्राचार गरेको पनि स्वतः अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ । यस सम्बन्धी पत्रहरू खोजी गर्ने हो भने भारतको राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय वा नेपालको परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालयमा पाउन सकिन्छ होला । यी पत्रहरू खोजी गरी

प्रकाशमा ल्याउन सकेमा नेपाल-जापान सम्बन्धको इतिहासमा थप महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी पुग्न जाने थियो ।

लेखक वरुवाले भने भैं नेपालले त्यसबेला विद्यार्थीहरू जापान नै पठाउनुको कारण, जापान र नेपाल दुवै मुलुकमा त्यसबेला एकाधिकारवादी शासन हुनु पनि थियो । बृटिश भारतको बढ्दो प्रभावको कारण राणा शासकहरू जापानतर्फ आकर्षित भएका हुन सक्छन् । यहाँ उल्लेखनीय कुरा के छ भने राणाहरूलाई जितिसुकै अंग्रेज भक्त भने पनि उनीहरूले नेपाललाई सदैव अंग्रेज प्रभुत्वबाट जोगाउन प्रयत्न गरेको इतिहास साक्षी छ । यदि राणाहरूले चाहेको भए उनीहरूलाई बृटिश अधीनता स्वीकार गर्न कुनै अवरोध थिएन । तर उनीहरूको हृदयको अभ्यन्तरमा 'राष्ट्रवादी भावना' ले गर्दा कहिल्यै त्यस्तो शर्त स्वीकार गरेनन् । वरु नेपाललाई स्वतन्त्र र सम्प्रभु राष्ट्रको मान्यता दिलाउने उद्देश्यले अंग्रेजलाई रिझाउने नीति चाँही अपनाएका थिए । यो राणा शासनको खास विशेषता थियो । अध्ययन गर्न जाने विद्यार्थीहरूलाई नेपाल सरकारले नै छात्रवृत्ति उपलब्ध गराउनुका साथै उनीहरूको अध्ययनको प्रगति विषयमा निकै चासो देखाएको थियो । यो प्रसङ्ग ज्यादै महत्वपूर्ण रहेको छ ।

नेपाल र जापानबीच प्रत्यक्ष अनौपचारिक सम्बन्धको स्थापना भएको लामो समय पछि मात्र नेपाल-जापानबीच कुटनैतिक सम्बन्ध स्थापना हुन पुग्न चाँहि एउटा खट्किदो कुरा हो । संभवतः यसमा नेपालका तत्कालीन शासकहरूको समयमै ध्यान पुग्न नसकेको हुन सक्छ, या तत्कालीन अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय एवं क्षेत्रीय राजनीतिको प्रभाव पनि हुन सक्छ । संक्षेपमा श्री वरुवाले पुस्तकको माध्यमबाट नेपाल-जापान सम्बन्धको ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि मात्र केलाउनु भएको छैन, साथ साथै नेपालको तत्कालीन राजनैतिक स्थिति, राणा शासकहरूको मनोदशा, बृटिश भारतको नेपालप्रतिको दृष्टिकोण, जापानको राजनैतिक, आर्थिक तथा औद्योगिक विकास तथा जापान जाने नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूको स्वेदशमा योगदान बारे यथासंभव प्रकाश पार्ने प्रयत्न पनि गर्नु भएको छ ।

लेखकले तत्कालीन शासनमा जाति प्रथाको कट्टरताको कति गहिरो प्रभाव रहेछ भन्ने पनि स्पष्ट पार्नु भएको छ । नेपालीहरूले बाहिर जाँदा अरूले छोएको खान नहुने हुँदा नोकर-चाकर, भान्छे, सँगै लिएर जानुपर्ने बाध्यता तत्कालीन नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूलाई पनि रहेको चर्चा गर्दै विना अनुमति विदेश गएकाले पद्मसुन्दर मल्लले जस्तै जातिच्युत हुनु पर्ने प्रसङ्गको पनि चर्चा गरेर तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको राम्रो चित्रण गर्नु भएको छ । नेपालको जापानसँगको सम्बन्धबाट बृटिशहरू अप्रसन्न बन्न पुगेको, बृटिशहरू नेपालमा जापानी प्रभाव पर्न नदिन सजग बनेको प्रसङ्गको चर्चा सप्रमाण गरेर लेखकले इतिहासकारहरूलाई यस पक्षमा थप अध्ययन र खोज गर्न उत्प्रेरित गराउनु भएको छ । यसरी श्री वरुवाले नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूको जापान भ्रमणको सन्दर्भलाई मात्र प्रकाश पार्नु भएको छैन साथसाथै अनेक महत्वपूर्ण तथ्यहरूलाई समेत उल्लेख गरेर यस पुस्तकलाई एक ऐतिहासिक दस्तावेजकै स्वरूप दिनु भएको छ ।

यो पुस्तक सामान्य कमजोरीबाट मुक्त भने हुन सकेको देखिदैन । लेखकले प्रसङ्गको क्रमवद्धतालाई कतिपय ठाउँमा अवरूद्ध गर्नु भएको छ । जस्तो देवशमशेरकै प्रसङ्ग समाप्त गरी नेपाली विद्यार्थीहरूको स्वदेश वापसी भैसकेपछि पुनः देवशमशेरको सन्दर्भ वर्णन गर्नु भएको छ । यदि प्रसङ्गक्रम मिलाइएको भए अझ राम्रो हुने थियो । त्यसैगरी लेखकले राणाकाललाई शान्तिपूर्ण शासन भनेर उल्लेख गर्नु भएको छ । स्वाभाविक शान्ति र भययुक्त शान्तिको अर्थमा अन्तर रहन्छ । राणाकाल भययुक्त शान्तिकाल थियो, जब भय हटेर गयो नेपाली जनताले राणाशाही विरुद्ध क्रान्तिको विगुल फुके । यसैगरी लेखकले यस पुस्तकमा राणा शासकहरूमध्ये देवशमशेर र पद्मशमशेरलाई उदारवादी शासकको वर्गमा राख्नु भएको छ । देवशमशेरको उदारवादीताप्रति त कुनै शंका छैन । तर जहाँसम्म पद्मशमशेर उदारवादी शासक थिए भन्ने कुरा छ त्यसमा तत्कालीन राजनीतिक वातावरणको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको पाइन्छ । वास्तवमा बहदो राणाविरोधी आन्दोलनको स्थितिमा आफ्नो शासन सत्तालाई टिकाउने चालवाजीको रूपमा मात्र पद्मशमशेरले उदारवादी बन्न खोजेको कुरा उनले वैधानिक कानून घोषणा गरे पनि सो को कर्तव्यन्ययन गर्न नसकी पलायन भएबाट नै स्पष्ट हुन्छ । तर देवशमशेरका सुधारहरु कुनै दवावमा भएका थिएनन् । श्री वरुवाले देवशमशेर तथा उनका पूर्ववर्ती राणा प्रधानमन्त्रीहरूले प्रधानमन्त्रीको रूपमा बृटिश मान्यता पाउन नसकेको उल्लेख गर्नु भएको छ । जुनकुरा ऐतिहासिक प्रमाणहरूले पुष्टि गर्दैनन् । जङ्गबहादुरले 'श्री ३ महाराज' उपाधि मात्र लिँदा अंग्रेजले मान्यता नदिएकै कारण प्रधानमन्त्री वमबहादुरको मृत्यु पश्चात् जंगबहादुरले श्री ३ र प्राइममिनिष्टर दुवै पद आफैले ग्रहण गरेका थिए । त्यस्तै जङ्गबहादुरको बेलायत भ्रमण पनि नेपालको प्रधानमन्त्रीकै हैसियतमा भएको थियो । देवशमशेरको पदच्युतिमा अंग्रेज सरकारको नैतिक समर्थन रहेको उल्लेख गरिएको छ । तर सो सम्बन्धमा कुनै ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण प्रस्तुत नहुँदा तथ्यपूर्ण मान्न कठिन पर्दछ । भाषाको शुद्धा शुद्धिमा लेखकले त्यति ध्यान पुऱ्याउन सक्नु भएको छैन । मुख्यतः ऐतिहासिक विषयवस्तुमा आधारित रहेकाले कतिपय विषयलाई ऐतिहासिक स्रोतहरूबाटै पुष्टि गरिएमा त्यो प्रामाणिक एवं वस्तुनिष्ठ बन्न जाने हुन्छ । आशा छ आगामी संस्करणमा लेखकले यी बुँदातर्फ दृष्टि दिनु हुने नै छ । जे जसो भएता पनि यो पुस्तक आफैमा पूर्ण छ ।

नेपाली, अंग्रेजी र जापानी भाषामा लेखिएको यस पुस्तकले विद्यार्थी, अनुसन्धानकर्ता एवं जिज्ञासुलाई असल बौद्धिक खुराक दिने अपेक्षा गर्न सकिन्छ । जापान जापानीहरूसँग गहिरो हेलमेल र लामो उठवस भएका लेखकबाट भविष्यमा यस्तै खोजमूलक ग्रन्थहरूको पाठकहरूले आशा राखेका छन् ।

- तीर्थप्रसाद मिश्र